

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

THE INTERVIEW:
RON HOWARD

DEATH IN THE RING

THE YEAR IN SEX

PLAYMATE
REVIEW

20Q: THE DUPLASS
BROTHERS

SAMANTHA BEE

CARS OF
THE YEAR

Pamela

A REVEALING RETURN
TO THE MANSION

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Hollywood people are dreamers," a 22-year-old **Pamela Anderson** told us in 1990. "I'm a dreamer too, so I guess I belong here." That Playmate shoot proved to be her big break. Even then she had a vision of where she was going, writing that being a Playmate meant "the start of something big!"—as if she knew she'd soon capture the hearts and minds of millions. Behind each of her sultry poses, Pam has always been the savviest woman in the room. Who better than **James Franco**, another dreamer, to delve into the stunning icon's history with PLAYBOY? With sublime photography by **Ellen von Unwerth**, Pamela is an exhilarating way to kick off the new year. Miscellany maven **Ben Schott** delivers *In the Court of King George*, a trove of casino trivia that reveals the back-of-house machinations of one of the most secretive, richly mythologized industries we know. In his *Playboy Interview* with Contributing Editor Stephen Rebello, **Ron Howard** provides new insight into his career, past and present. The actor, director and Tinseltown Renaissance man may never escape his nice-guy reputation, but he conquered the film industry in part by silencing critics and quelling insubordinates; his latest, *In the Heart of the Sea*, is out now. In January, peerless former *Daily Show* correspondent **Samantha Bee** takes her seat at an exclusive table as the only woman hosting a late-night talk show in America. The TBS debut of *Full Frontal With Samantha Bee* promises to be hilarious; hear Bee's take on how she's prepared to lead the charge in a *Talk* Q&A. In *Forum's* "Gender Politics," **Steve Friess** parses the state of libertarianism, another male-dominated arena, and how the movement's roots and beliefs would seem to contradict its sausage-fest reality. The moviemaking Duplass brothers explain in *20Q* how they've built their careers into a near-invincible creative force in the film industry, while photographers **Herring & Herring** take the offbeat duo for a swim—literally. If you're feeling the need for a testosterone tidal wave, turn to **Marcus Amick's** *Cars of the Year*, where rides set to turn heads and tear through our daydreams are road-tested and PLAYBOY-approved. Saving the best for last, in *Year in Sex*, Research Chief **Nora O'Donnell** surveys 2015, from Caitlyn Jenner to *Fifty Shades of Grey*. We consider Pamela's turn in these pages to be the first word on 2016. "I hope that when people see me in PLAYBOY," she told us in 1990, "they'll see more than the surface." If they didn't then, they do now.



Ben Schott



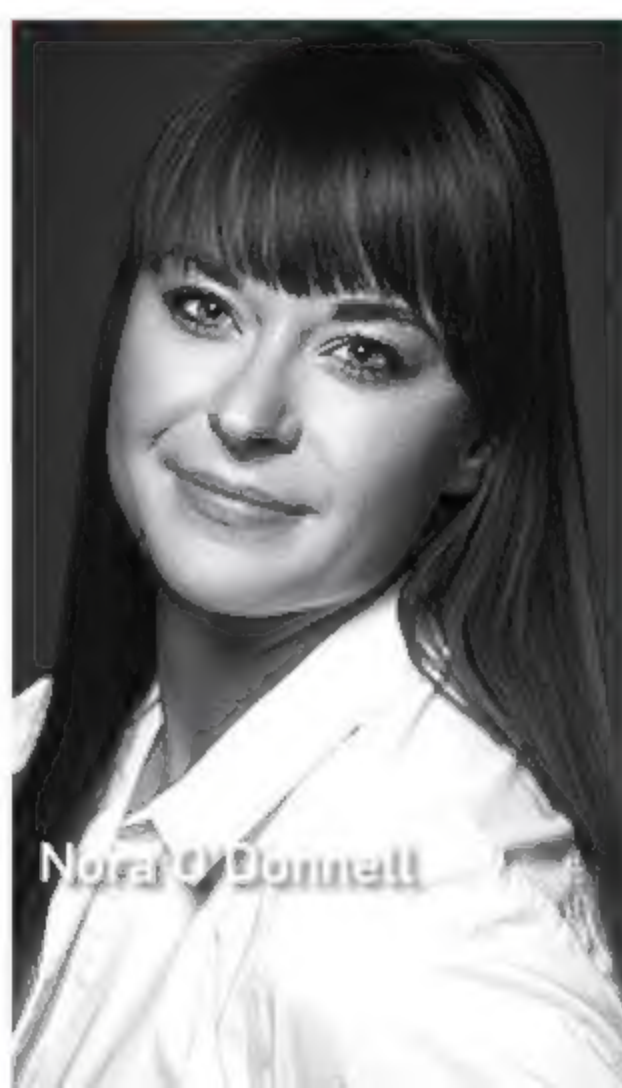
James Franco



Ron Howard



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Pamela Anderson and Ellen von Unwerth



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PLAYBOY

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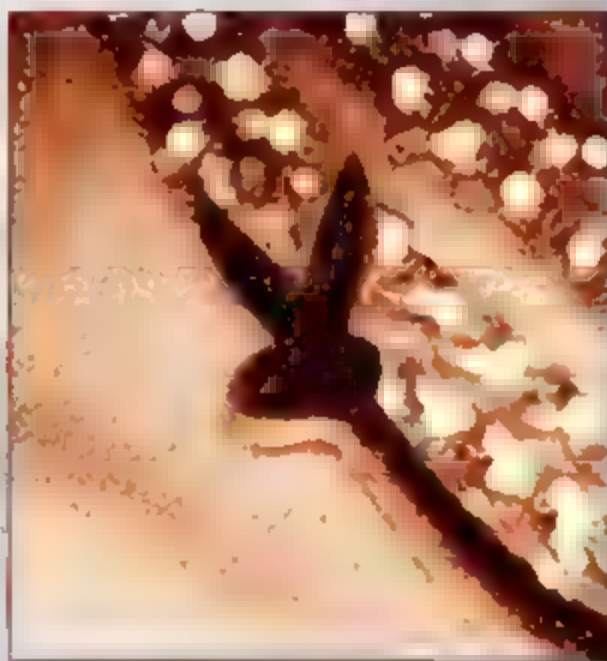
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THIS PAGE AND COVER
BY ELLEN VON UNWERTH

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Pamela
Anderson

COVER STORY

The surprise or none, our Rabbit—and the world—still gets lost in Pam's brilliant sex appeal.



PLAYBOY

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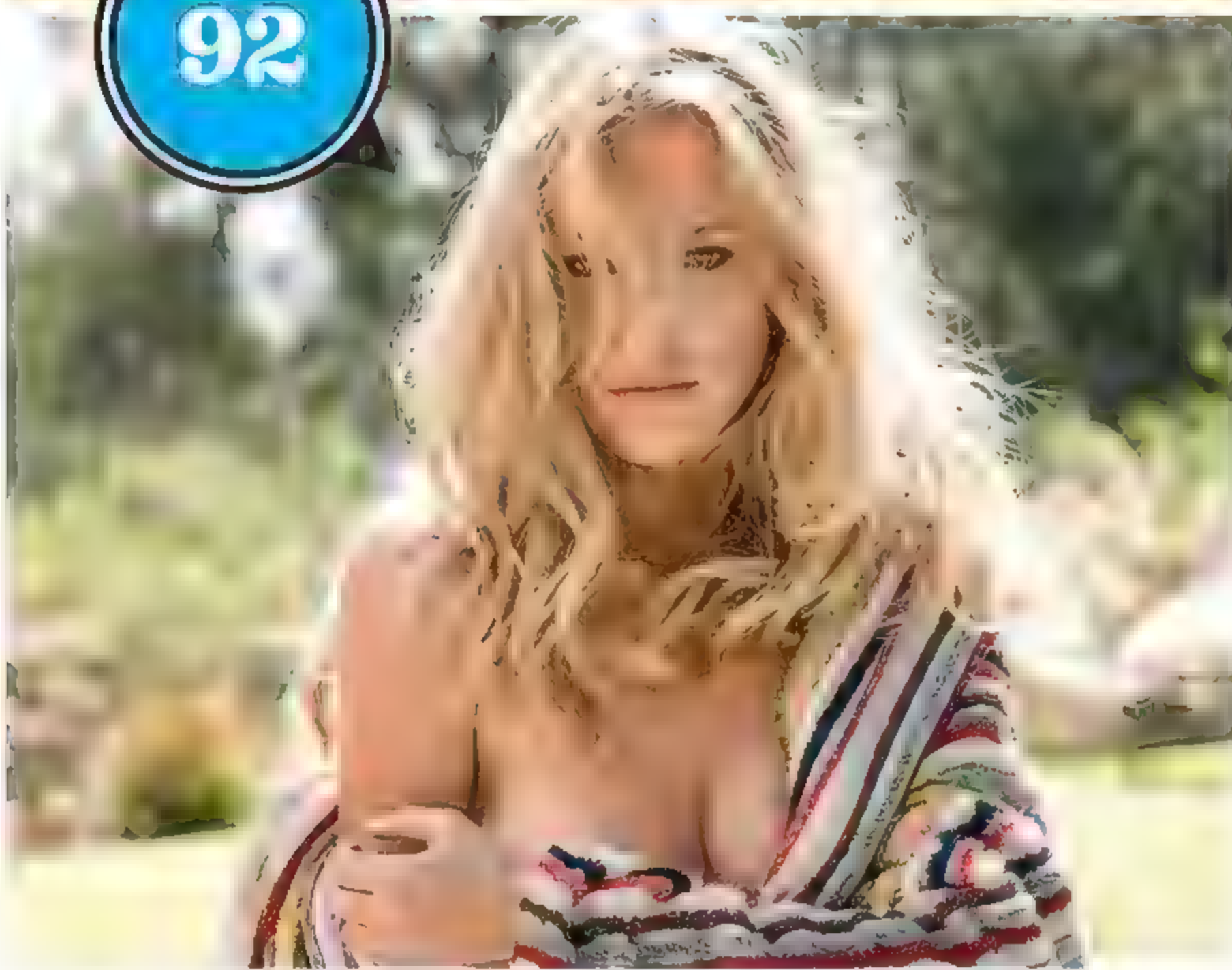
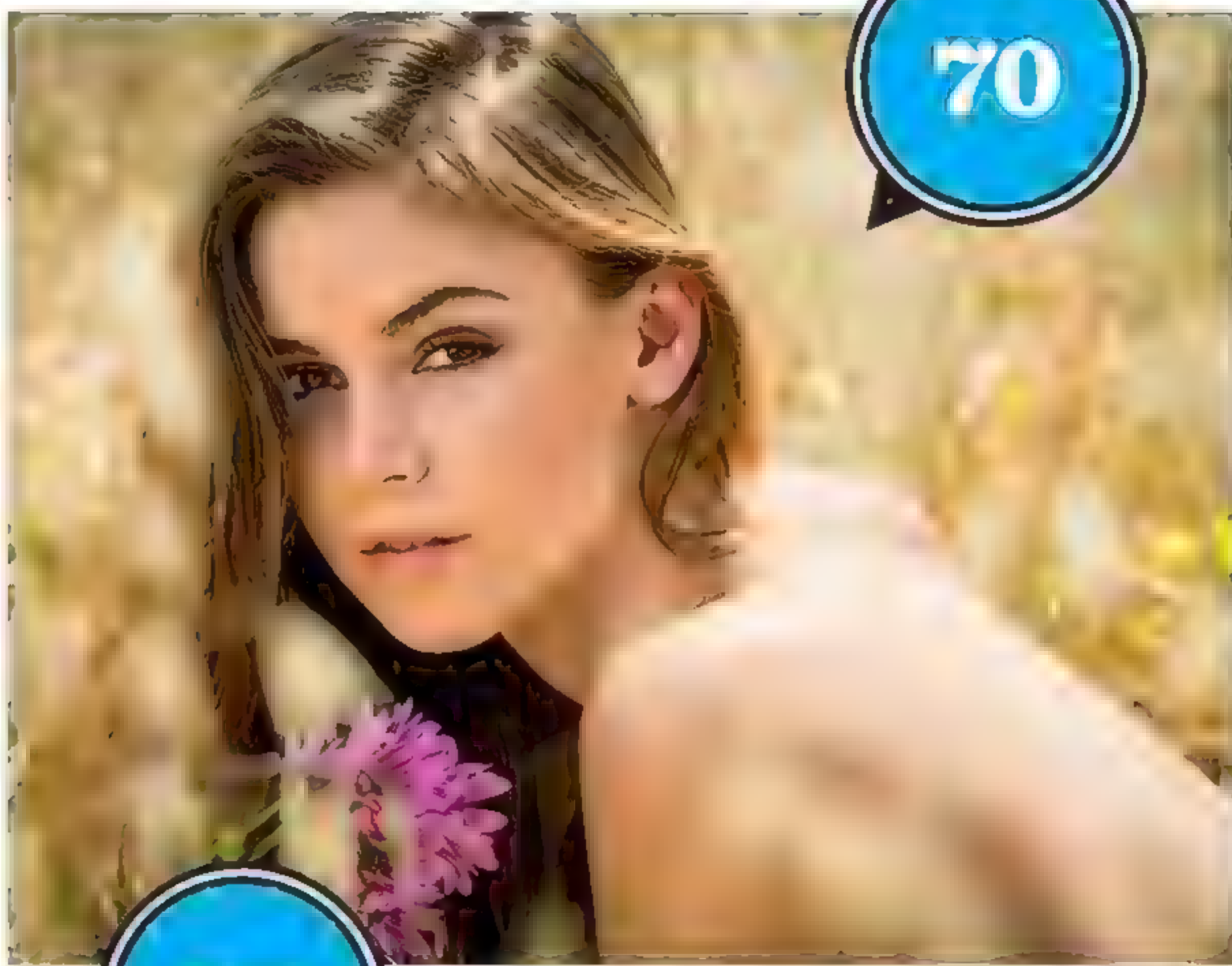
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20Q: Duplass Brothers



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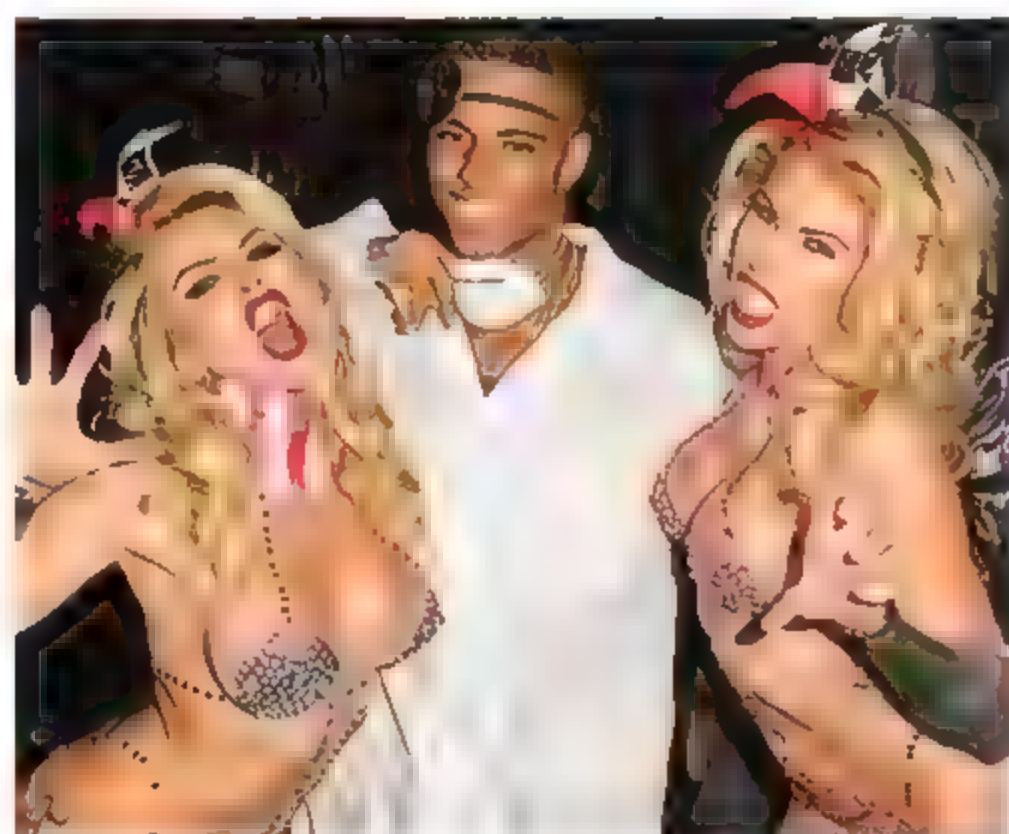
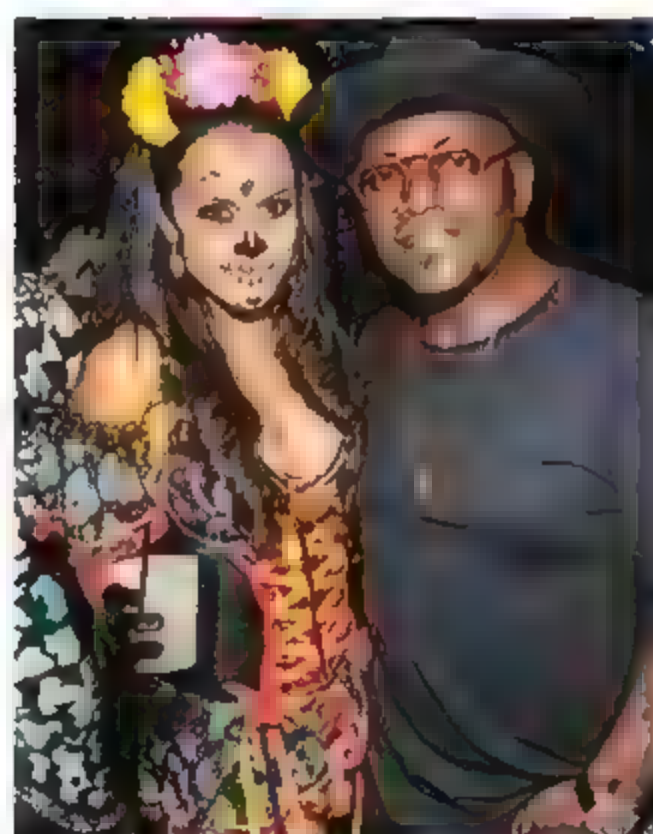
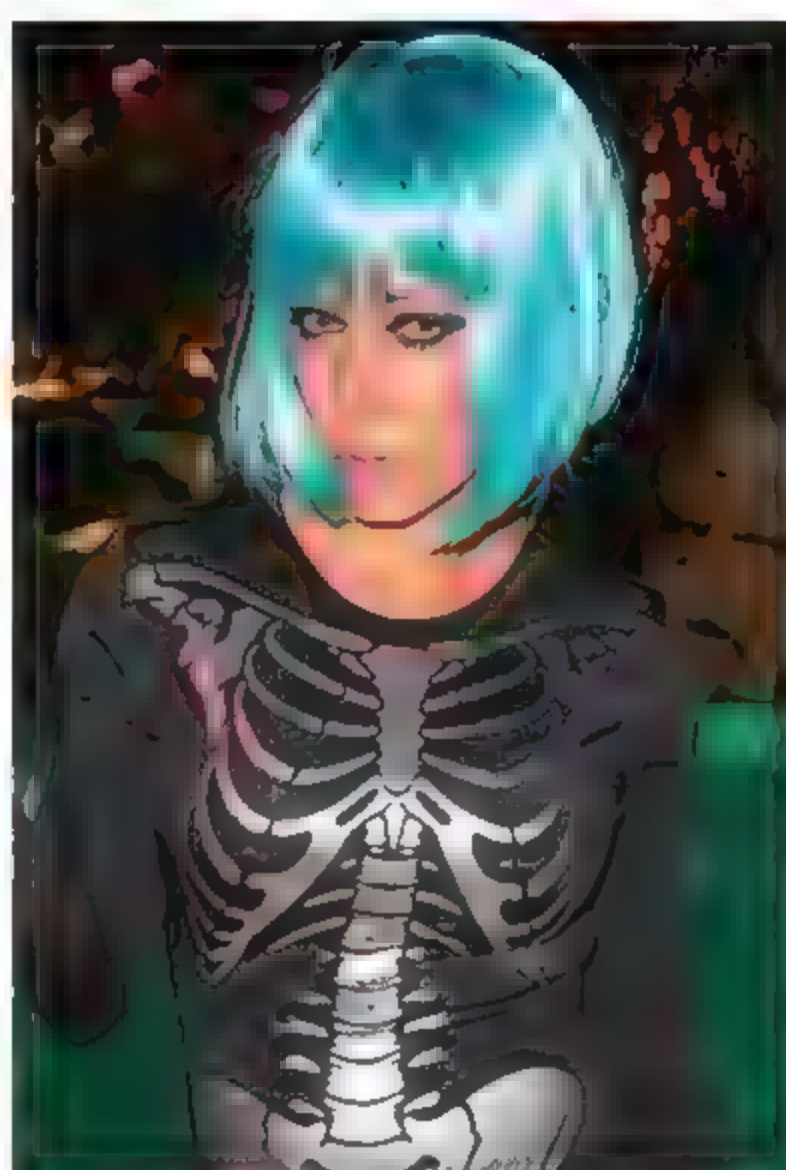
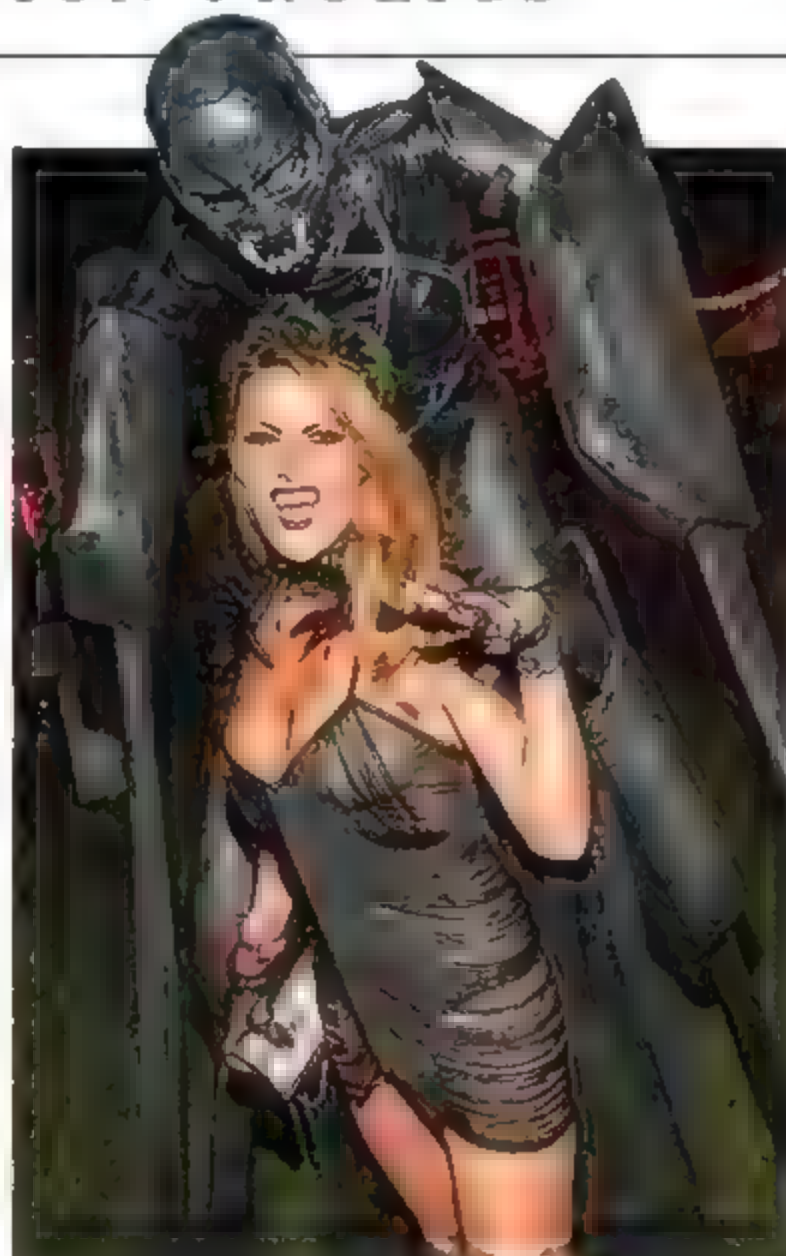
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WORLD of

PLAYMATE SIGHTINGS

MANSION FROLICS

NIGHTLIFE NOTES



Playboy

PAST and PRESENT

• In August 1958, Hef introduced readers to cartoonist Jules Feiffer. His satirical images of our "urban, sick society" were so beloved that he continued to draw for PLAYBOY well into the 1980s, ultimately winning a Pulitzer in 1986. Now, director Dan

Mirvish is bringing one of Feiffer's most famous series, *Bernard and Huey*, to the big screen. Featuring an original script and new drawings by Feiffer, including this one, production on the Kickstarter-backed comedy kicks off this spring.



MONSTERS' BALL AT THE MANSION

➔ The happiest place on earth for adults became the creepiest for one night in October when Playboy hosted its annual Halloween bash at Hef's house. Bedecked in a haunted-circus vibe, the Mansion turned topsy-turvy as menacing clowns traipsed the grounds on stilts,

eerie nymphs inhabited the Grotto and Playmates got their spook on. Music exec Randy Jackson (bottom left), *Straight Outta Compton*'s Keith Powers (bottom middle), girl next door Kendra Wilkinson (bottom right) and others viewed the madness from atop a 45-foot Ferris wheel.



SILKY SMOOTH

• Miss August 2015 *Dominique Jane* smolders in silk from the *Fleur du Mal* x Playboy lingerie line, now available at FleurDuMal.com—just in time for Valentine's Day.



AMPED UP

• *Stephanie Branton*, *Dani Mathers* and *Alexandra Tyler* rock the cover of *Guitar World*'s 2016 Review Guide, flaunting their best assets alongside the best axes.





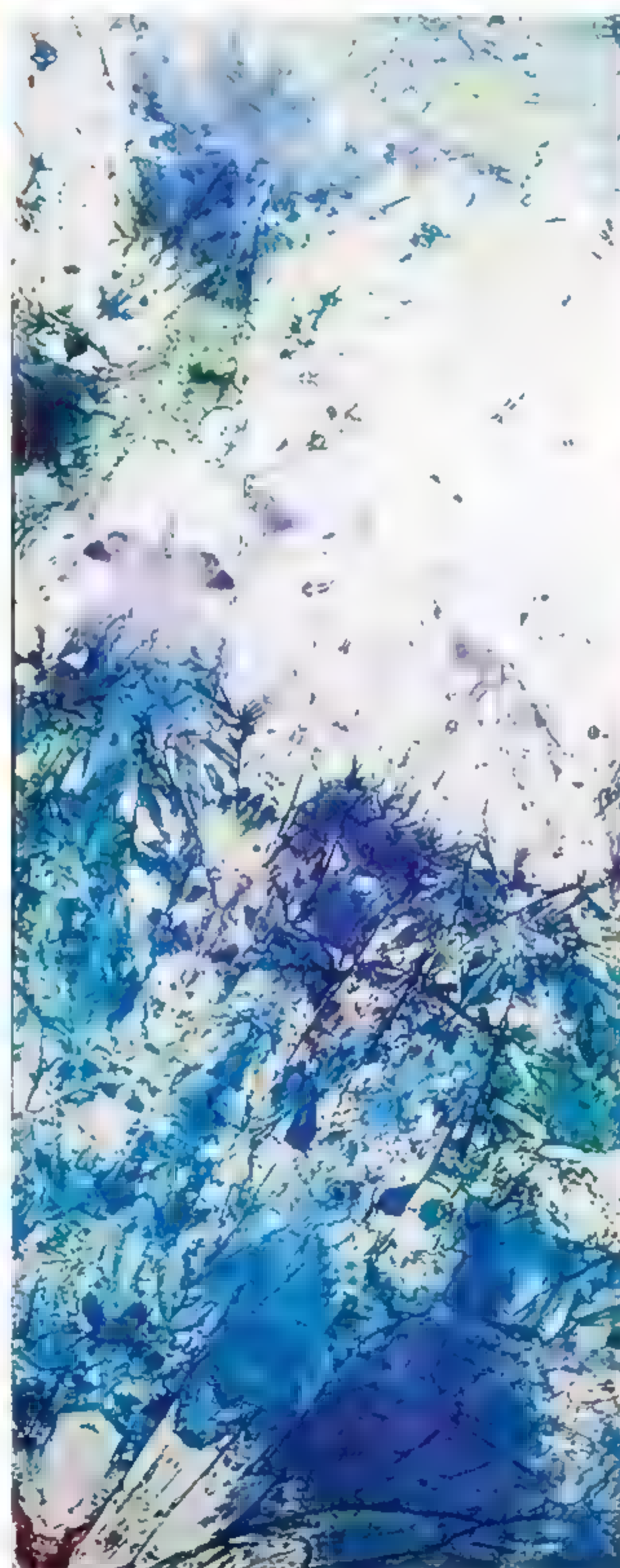
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THE PSYCHE OF RACHEL HARRIS

➦ Fresh from celebrating her Miss November 2015 pictorial, **Rachel Harris** debuted her second solo art exhibition, *Psychedelic Show*, in December at the Well studio in Los Angeles. Comprising 15 abstract

pieces ranging from five to 12 feet long, the brightly colored, textured collection was inspired by psychedelic rock. To see more of Rachel's artwork, including items for sale, visit RachelTHarris.com.



PUPPY LOVE

• Miss February 2008 **Michelle McLaughlin** has loved animals ever since she was her neighborhood's pet sitter as a kid. Today, the mother to three rescue dogs works with the Silky Terrier Rescue Charitable Trust to nurse abandoned dogs back to health and find them loving homes. "My goal is to open my own sanctuary so I can save as many lives as possible," she says. To see the pups Michelle has helped rescue that are now up for adoption in L.A., check out her Instagram account [@poundpuppiesla](https://www.instagram.com/poundpuppiesla).



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WANDERLUST EMBODIED

• Miss February **Kristy Garrett** takes a break from traveling for some poolside R&R in L.A. See her [extended pictorial online](#).

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COOL BROS

• The Duplass duo also takes a dip in the pool for 20Q, though we can't say it's as sexy as Miss February's

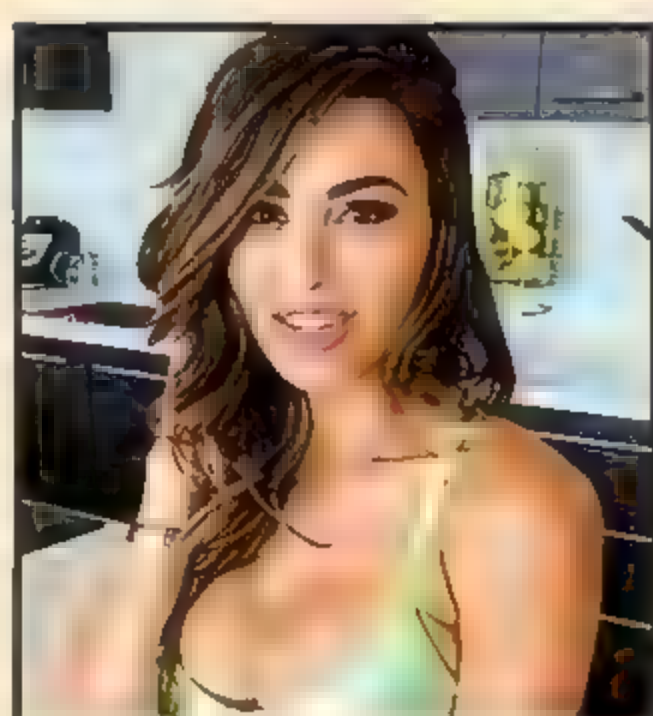
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INFORMED VOTING

• Before casting your vote for PMOY 2016, check out our special section to learn more about the 12 Playmates up for election

FIT FRIENDS

• Miss October 2015 **Ana Cheri's** latest fitness e-book, *The Gentleman's Guide to Strength & Attraction*, will whip you back into shape after all those Christmas cookies.

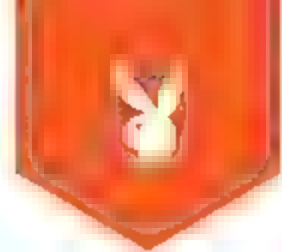


A PUFF PIECE

➦ Buttoning up is not our favorite activity, but when the winter winds howl and there's a new Supreme x Playboy leather jacket to be worn, who are we to protest? The slick, puffy coat (\$798,

SupremeNewYork.com) is available in red, brown or black, has down filling and faux fur to keep you feeling warm and of course features a Rabbit Head pattern to keep you looking cool.





dear PLAYBOY

ALGORITHM NATION

Algorithm is an unfamiliar word, but don't be afraid; it's just a collection of letters that when combined make a sound that indicates a word and its meaning (*Resistance Is Futile*, November). These letters are simply tools that, when combined in certain arrangements, perform tasks for humans. That is all an algorithm is—a collection of information. Just because it's digital doesn't make it any more dangerous than a phone book. Anyone awed by the supposed power of algorithms should try a Google search and wade through 1,000 "answers" before they find what they're looking for. It's as sinister as a teddy bear.

Julius Zimmerman
Cleveland, Ohio

"Resistance is futile" is right. Christopher Steiner brilliantly examines

how our future is beginning to look less like the one Marty McFly visited in *Back to the Future Part II* and more like the one George Orwell envisioned in *1984*. Will algorithms enjoy our company? Not if they're like any other big brother I've ever met.

Jared Smith
Los Angeles, California

I was reassured after reading "What Code Isn't" (*Forum*, October) that computer software will never supplant human intelligence and an inability to code won't render me unemployable and obsolete. Then, *Resistance Is Futile* convinced me I should just give up and surrender to our robot overlords. Perhaps the first-rate thinkers at PLAYBOY can hold two such opposing ideas in mind and still



function, but for me the mixed message does not compute.

Stewart Ramsay
Somerville, Massachusetts

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER

Bring on immortality ("The Dark Side of Eternal Life," *Forum*, November). I'm 25 and already worried about not having enough time. As Jason Silverstein says, there will be winners and losers; extended life is a prize we should expect people to fight over.

Joe Johnson
Seattle, Washington

MAGIC IN MICHIGAN

Daniel Radcliffe is a great actor (*20Q*, November). I love that he had such a positive experience when visiting Michigan. I'd like to think the Mitten State's welcome mat will always be out for him.

Kate Franklin
Detroit, Michigan

B-I-N-G-O

Christoph Waltz's *Playboy Interview* (November) was fascinating and insightful. Only a well-trained Method actor could portray a Nazi colonel exclaiming "Ooh, that's a bingo!" with such fiendish giddiness. Mentors Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler would be proud.

David Fixler
Grand Rapids, Michigan

TWICE AS NICE

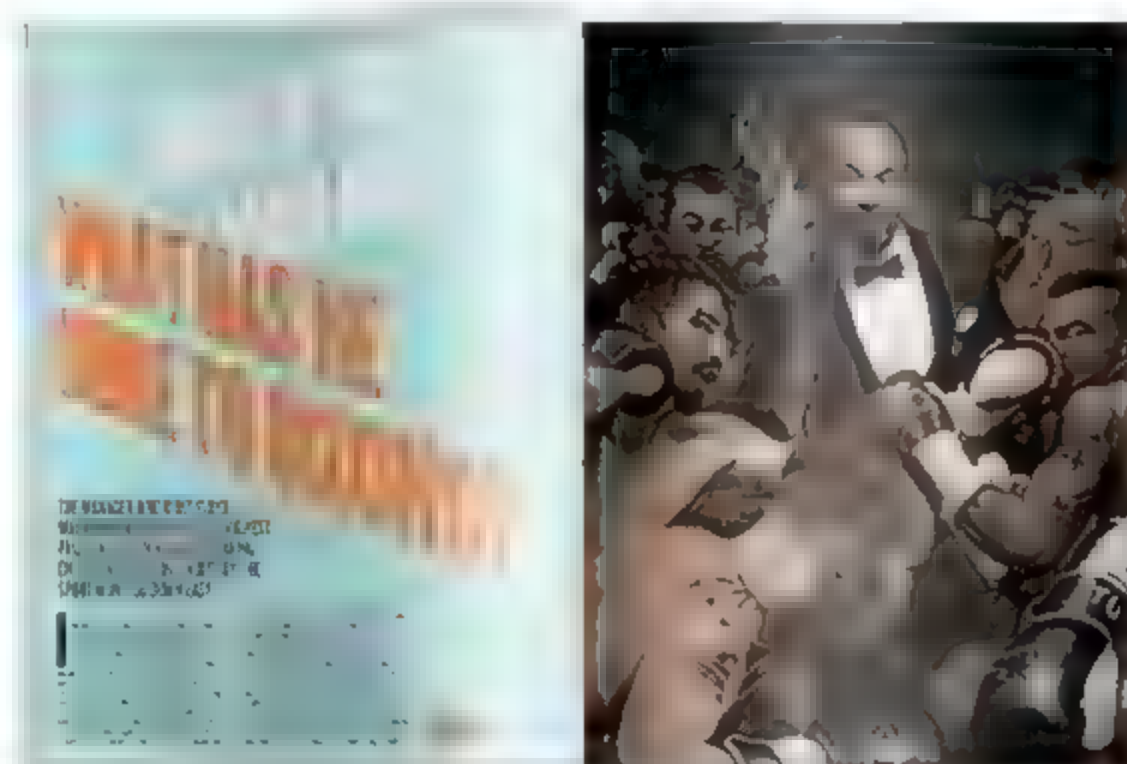
In the October *Dear Playboy* ("Of Athletes and Asterisks") a writer suggests one way to deal with steroids in sports "is to create two different leagues—'natural' versus 'enhanced.'" Following that thinking,

should I expect my PLAYBOY subscription in two editions, one natural and one enhanced? I wouldn't mind doubling up!

Garry Shelley
Southampton, New York

SOCK IT TO US

I enjoyed *Who Is This Man and What Has He Done to Boxing?* (November). I don't follow pro boxing, though maybe I will now that Al Haymon's Premier Boxing Champions has made deals with network



TV. My interest in the sport is personal: I take classes as part of my Parkinson's therapy. We don't slug each other, but the stretching and strength training (not to mention the gym community) have done wonders. I'm glad Haymon's series will bring boxing to a wider audience.

Frank Stern
New York, New York

Okay, PLAYBOY, enough with the boxing stories already. We get it! You have a

fetish. We all have them, and your publication is the first to let us know that's totally okay. But plenty of other sports deserve your coverage.

Danny Tandoni
San Antonio, Texas

Turn to *Life and Death on the Ropes*, about wrestling star Pedro "Hijo del Perro" Aguayo, on page 50.

TAN-TALIZING LINES

The young women featured in *Girls of the Big 12* (October) are tan all over. The thing about tan lines, from a purely psychological point of view, is that it's more exciting to look at something that appears to have been covered up and then revealed than it is to see something that looks as if it has always been on display.

Rick Meyerson
Spokane, Washington

MENACES TO SOCIETY?

Cody Wilson, whose products allow anyone to 3-D-print firearms, is obviously an intelligent inventor (*The Perfect Weapon*, October). He's also a relentless self-promoter with no apparent regard for the consequences of his actions. As such, I think he's a danger to society. The National Rifle Association was founded in 1871 to promote marksmanship, and many Americans embraced it. Nearly a hundred years later, the NRA leadership was replaced with individuals who had politicized goals, and the character of the organization was

fundamentally altered. The boycott of Smith & Wesson's smart gun, as William Wheeler reports, is one consequence of this. Why does the NRA spend its time, money and energy on endeavors such as blocking research into gun fatalities? The NRA itself has become a danger to society. As citizens of a free country we need to be aware of our freedoms and examine closely those individuals and organizations that would, under the guise of protecting our rights, instead manipulate us to achieve their own ends.

Jim Campbell
Aurora, Illinois

DUSK DELIGHTS

Polina Putilova (*Before Sunset*, October) is one of the sexiest women to ever grace your magazine. She has the face of a goddess.

Ken Ray
Reno, Nevada

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

The *Playboy Interview* with Joseph Gordon-Levitt (October), who plays Philippe Petit in *The Walk*, reminds me of a personal story. I lived in San Juan, Puerto Rico between 1973 and 1975, working as an air traffic controller. On my days off, I frequented the casinos and lounges of local hotels, including the Americana (which has since been renamed). There, I met a vacationing Petit, and we became friends. I told him I was an ex-paratrooper with 19 jumps, but I ain't walking no high-wire tightrope. He surprised me by saying he would never jump out of an airplane (which is not nearly as death-defying as walking on a high wire). Nice guy; I liked him.

Joe Mercer
Memphis, Tennessee

A WORK OF ART

Rachel Harris's pictorial is simply inspiring—such natural beauty (*A Creative Force*, November). Where can I find her paintings online?

David Chastain
Houston, Texas

Her art is visible in the background of her pictorial images. To see more, visit the video and photo galleries at Playmates.com/rachel-harris. And check out this month's World of Playboy.

Rachel Harris's captivating presence personifies everything your magazine was, is and shall ever be: a celebration of all things female—beauty, talent and charm.

Paul De Georgio
Saratoga Springs, New York

ON THE SEX-PARTY BEAT

I'm a die-hard PLAYBOY fan. I love the September issue—run more articles like Hugh Garvey's *Eyes Wide Open*, please.

Keith Clark
Framingham, Massachusetts

IT'S A RING THING

I appreciate Dr. James Andrews's obvious intelligence and the work he's done in the field of athletic medicine (*The Most Important Man in Sports*, October). However, I was surprised to see a 2014 Alabama SEC Championship ring identified as an Auburn championship ring.



The script A on the ring is the unmistakable logo of the University of Alabama; Auburn's logo is a block AU. Roll Tide!

J.M. Reed
Hoover, Alabama

Nice catch! The photograph is indeed of a championship ring from Alabama, not Auburn. Dr. Andrews acts as a physician for both rival teams.

RED ALL OVER

Thank you for the double dose of fire in November (*Seeing Red*). The models are hotter than ghost peppers. In her Playmate pictorial (*Home Body*, November 2014), Gia Marie says she'd be happy if her photos sparked redhead fantasies. Along with Dominique Jane, she has accomplished that mission.

Jose Gutierrez
Miami, Florida



Getting cozy: Gia Marie and Dominique Jane.

Seeing Red is one of your absolute best pictorials—two gorgeous women and fantastically shot.

Scott Krol
Roswell, Georgia

The way Dominique Jane and Gia Marie nestle together in *Seeing Red* portrays an intimacy that transcends sexuality. I am drawn to the photo of the pair reading head-to-head from a book, but when I turn back to their pose captured for the *Table of Contents*, I bow to their bliss.

Ken Crockett
Austin, Texas

BEST GIFT EVER

The first Christmas I was married, my wife gave me a one-year subscription. We just celebrated our 50th anniversary, and I still read PLAYBOY cover to cover. The only downside to reading your great magazine for more than 50 years is that I already know most of the *Party Jokes*. Keep up the great work. Thanks to my wife and to PLAYBOY for 50 fantastic years.

Mike Pinkosky
Beacon Falls, Connecticut

Congratulations on your anniversary—and on your fine taste in reading material.

FOLLOW THE MONEY

Joshua Foust falls short of understanding why America loses wars (*Why the Other Guys Keep Winning*, September). It is not the military (or even the broken political system that controls it) that's to blame. Rather, American exceptionalism, the existence of no true rival power and the needs of business interests (a.k.a. the military-industrial complex) that leech taxpayer money fuel these unjust wars. When the amount of money that can be made on soft-power stints eclipses the profits from warfare, then Foust's approach will prevail.

Brock Bevan
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THE CHERI ON TOP

Thanks for the gorgeous shoot of Miss October Ana Cheri (*Ma Cheri*). Amazing work by everyone involved. She wins my vote for PMOY 2016.

Mike D'Orfeo
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

You could run a picture of Ana Cheri in every issue and it would go over well.

Jack Nestor
Pleasant Hill, California

Michael Bernard's photography is outstanding, but the two personal photos of Ana Cheri wearing bikinis in her *Data Sheet* are my favorites.

Scott Raiger
Stuttgart, Germany



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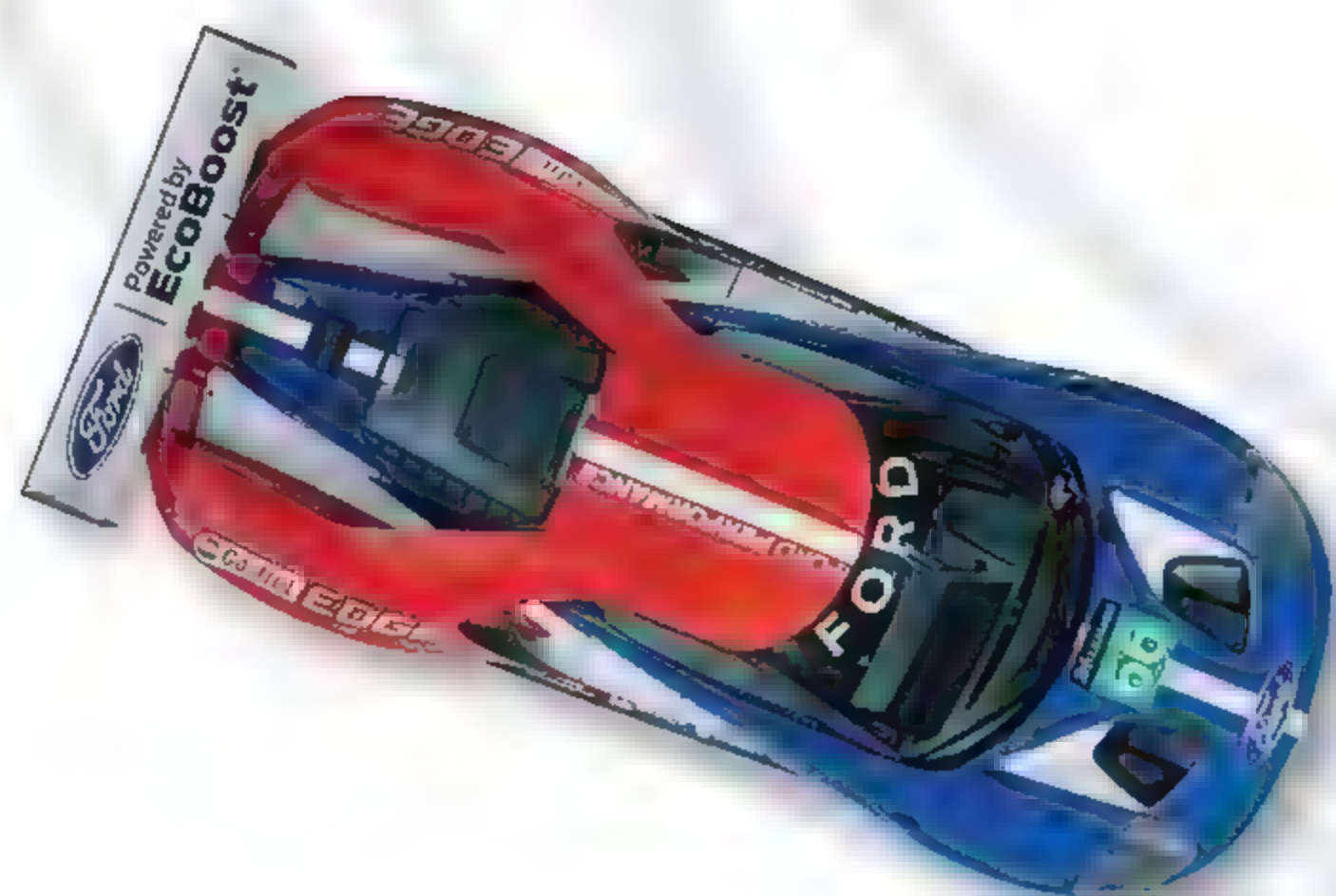
AFTER HOURS

Photography by
JOSH REED

BECOMING ATTRACTION

Lindsey Morgan

"I'M NOT AFRAID of pushing myself to my physical limits and being the woman who stands out," says Lindsey Morgan, breakout star of the CW's apocalyptic adventure series *The 100*. Unlike that of many TV ingenues who play badass newbies, Lindsey's physicality isn't an act. She grew up playing water polo, she has trekked across Asia, and she gladly taps into a no-holds-barred attitude to shamelessly showcase her sexy swagger. "I can handle anything on my own," she says. "Living any other way is a waste of time."



CAN FORMULA ONE MAKE IT IN AMERICA?

NASCAR'S FANCIER COUSIN SPINS ITS WHEELS

Fifteen miles southeast of downtown Austin, Texas is a strange place for a car race traditionally associated with glamorous European cultural centers. But last October 25, officials waved the green flag to signal the start of the U.S. Grand Prix. Formula One cars driven by superstars such as England's Lewis Hamilton and Germany's Sebastian Vettel zipped around 20 turns on the 3.4-mile track; Hamilton took home the hardware. The event is akin to LeBron James, Kobe Bryant and Kevin Durant playing an NBA game in Manila, and it shows how serious F1's leadership is about gaining traction in the American market. But the sport is struggling internationally, and even if it becomes a hit here, the efforts may be too late.

While F1 can't boast nearly the domestic popularity of NASCAR or IndyCar—the highest F1 television ratings are dwarfed by those of traditional American racing styles—the U.S. Grand Prix has actually been around for 108 years, debuting in 1908. Multiple venues have hosted the race; the Indianapolis Motor Speedway did so between 2000 and 2007 before a four-year U.S. absence that ended when Austin's Circuit of the Americas opened in 2012.

Attendance at the three-day festival dropped from 265,499 in 2012 to 237,406 in 2014, but F1 continues its U.S. push. A race in New Jersey is a perennial discussion topic: NASCAR team owner Gene Haas will launch an F1 effort in the 2016 season. But it's hardly a gasoline-injected process.

"When F1 comes here, it comes as a side," says Scott Speed, one of the most recent American drivers to race in an F1 car. "It feels different than it does in other countries."

For F1 to build an audience in the U.S., says Tom Webb, director of motorsports event marketing for the Circuit of the Americas, the sport needs three things: a race (check), a team (check, sometime this year) and a driver Americans can root for. Alexander Rossi, a 24-year-old from California, is the best hope behind the wheel. He currently races in GP2, F1's Triple-A league, and is the only American to have an FIA super license, which is required to race in the F1 World Championship. "If you can't go to that race and root for an American driver or an American team, there are only so many who will be into it," Rossi says. (Speed's experience seems to confirm that. "When I was racing, I was a million times more popular in China than I was in America," he says.)

But the sport faces a deeper crisis on a global scale. Red Bull owner Dietrich Mateschitz has threatened to pull funding from his powerful Red Bull team because of rising costs and inadequate engines. Private equity firm CVC Capital Partners, widely derided for putting profits ahead of the sport's future, might sell its 35 percent stake in F1. Races in countries including Bahrain, Abu Dhabi and Azerbaijan (and, to some extent, the U.S.) are seen as cash grabs, while traditional F1 strongholds such as Germany and France have given up on hosting duties altogether.

Resolving the difficulties that face the sport makes a pit stop look simple. In order to thrive, F1 racing in the U.S. needs to become a destination event for more than gearheads. In America's overcrowded sports landscape, that's a huge barrier to overcome. One has to wonder how much time Austin organizers, and F1 in general, have until the gas meter reads *E*.—Noah Davis

MORAL MATING

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SAVE POINT

HOW DO YOU ARCHIVE A VIDEO GAME? JUST PRESS START

One Friday night in June at the University of Michigan, with the dorms empty and the campus eerily calm, one building still rocked: the library. In one corner, kids searched for a zombie cure in *Dark Souls II* on a PlayStation4. Nearby, on an Xbox 360, some friends used *Fight Night Round 3* to find out what it might have looked like if Muhammad Ali fought Oscar De La Hoya. Elsewhere, a rowdy bunch were beating the crap out of one another in a noisy game of *Super Smash Bros.* on a Wii while a young woman sat with an iPad, trying to best the space-adventure mobile game *Alone*.

No one hushes anyone in the Computer and Video Game Archive, a 1,400-square-foot basement lair within UM's engineering complex. The CVGA—which may be the coolest repository of knowledge since the Sumerians invented the library—boasts nearly 6,000 video games that can be played for free on more than 50 consoles, from the classic Atari 2600 to the Xbox 360 with Kinect. At other video game archives, such as the ones at Stanford or the Library of Congress, the public doesn't get to, you know, play.

"We wanted a space that fulfills academic purposes and also encourages people to use these games," says Dave Carter, the engineering librarian who founded the collection in 2008 with 20 titles, a PS3, an Xbox and an original Wii. He has an annual budget of \$13,000 to acquire new materials (the latest games and systems), but most of the CVGA's growth is a result of donors clearing out their garages of ancient e-junk. That's how Carter landed such obscure systems as the short-lived early-1980s cult favorite Vectrex and the once-hot-in-Japan Game Boy knockoff WonderSwan. The favorites of every era are here, from an original 1975 home version *Pong* machine and the all-text adventure *Zork* to *Call of Duty* and *Candy Crush*. There's even a Commodore 64 with a classic old-school cassette deck to load software. Carter's most popular title? "*FIFA*," he says, "on any system we can get it."

Along with the fun and games, the archive has serious academic bona fides. Engineering classes swing by for lessons on programming and game design, and various humanities classes see research value in the collection. "Professors bring students in to study the psychological aspect of games, or a cultural studies

class will compare how Japanese samurai are depicted in different titles," says Valerie Waldron, the CVGA's manager. One group of students used a car-racing game to examine the effects of texting while driving; a poster on the wall of the CVGA advertises a new class coming this fall on video game music.

The collection was suggested by art professor Phoebe Gloeckner, who wanted to incorporate game design, history and culture into her lectures. "This is our cultural history," says Gloeckner. Video games, she says, are "a medium like any other—like painting, like literature. There's the possibility of multiple masterpieces. It can do the same thing a novel does, take readers into another world and keep them there for however long it takes to tell a story. Who's to say video games can't be expressions of great genius? Of emotion, of passion?"

The CVGA has also become a recruitment tool. "We get the really high-achieving students the engineering school wants," Carter says. "They leave them with us for half an hour and let them get their hands on the controllers. It's a definite selling point." Maybe UM's Athletics Department should consider bringing its prospects by. It can't hurt.—*Steve Friess*

MOST CITED

Sure, researchers tout the academic merits of the CVGA, but its three most checked-out titles, according to Dave Carter, share one distinct quality: They're pure fun.



Why is *FIFA* the CVGA's most popular title? A simple reason—people love sports.



First-person shooters are abiding favorites; *Call of Duty: Black Ops II* was 2015's hottest.



Super Smash Bros. play is restricted to Fridays only due to gamers' rowdiness, says Carter.



Q+A

SAMANTHA BEE

THE COMEDIAN AND LONGTIME *DAILY SHOW* CORRESPONDENT LAUNCHES A GRENADE INTO LATE-NIGHT TV

• In one of Samantha Bee's most intrepid feats of reportage on *The Daily Show*, she got a penis pump stuck to her face. The 2014 sight gag added a bit of levity to a more sobering story: Some lawmakers believe that insurance companies should cover the cost of penis pumps for men but not birth control for women. Bee, a Canadian-born mother of three, made a name for herself defending the rights of women and children on Comedy Central. This month she will expand her feminist foothold by becoming America's sole female late-night TV host, with her weekly TBS program, *Full Frontal With Samantha Bee*. "It's not exactly virgin territory—though I am a virgin," Bee says with a laugh. "Women do want to be represented. I think if you can tap into that audience, it could really be amazing."—Jenna Marotta

PLAYBOY: You spent 12 years as a *Daily Show* correspondent. How much did your decision to leave the show have to do with Jon Stewart's departure?

BEE: It was a convergence of all these different things. My husband [fellow *Daily Show* alum Jason Jones] and I sold a lot of scripts, so over the years that was kind of our second job. It wasn't like, "Oh my God, we've got to get out of *The Daily Show*," but we definitely felt the next stage of our careers was to be creators and to own a project.

PLAYBOY: What if one of you had been offered the job of hosting *The Daily Show*?

BEE: I think what happened for us was so much better. Listen, it's an incredible opportunity, and it comes with a lot of amazing stuff, but I'm much more inclined to be a grass-roots type of person. I'm excited to be able to create my own workplace, to curate it just so, to try something new and see what happens.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of the new workplace, will there be a desk?

BEE: There's nothing in God's earth that could compel me to sit behind a desk, okay? I don't know what it's going to look like at this stage, but I'm done with the static idea of a desk. I'd like to have a more fluid space. Maybe it will be like *Hollywood Squares* with desks and I'll switch desks. I'll probably have a hamster desk, or just a Plexiglas cube with Yo-Yo Ma in it.

PLAYBOY: What was your initial reaction when you learned of *Vanity Fair*'s October 2015 portrait of 10 late-night TV hosts, all of them male?

BEE: I was in Long Island with my children, who were frolicking in a wooden ship in a pumpkin-patch playground when someone sent it to me. I just felt noise in my ears like the sound of the ocean, like I had two big conch shells pressed up against my head.

PLAYBOY: What did you do?

BEE: I said to Jason, "Excuse me for a second." I went into the barn by the cider donuts and thought, I have to fix this photograph in a way

that suits me. I don't want to take anything away from any of those guys—I think they're all great. It's not about them. But I do hate to be ignored. I already had a funny photo of myself as a centaur—Jason and I are an unusual couple—so I called my friend and said, "Can you take these two photos and merge them?" He put my photo and the *Vanity Fair* photo together, and I tweeted it because I was like, This is so fucking stupid.

PLAYBOY: Do you have a theory about why men have been able to claim late-night television for themselves until now?

BEE: I don't really know. The writing rooms have historically been male spaces. It's the same with stand-up. It's like a forest of donges. That's changing, but I think it takes some clever maneuvering and forward thinking. TBS has taken a huge leap of faith hiring me out of the blue. I'm thrilled.

PLAYBOY: You're currently writing your second book. In your first book, *I Know I Am, But What Are You*, you confess to stealing cars as a teen. How did that come about?

BEE: It was my boyfriend. He was a terrible influence on me. That's probably why I liked him. But I always looked upstanding. You can do *anything* if you dress nicely and act as if you're supposed to be there. I was a car thief with braces and Bermuda shorts. I thought that was what I would do for my whole life. When I was 15, my boyfriend and I were scheduled to go to the airport. We were going to leave Canada, go to Miami, live on the beach and fence stolen cars. He chickened out. It's actually his fault I'm not living under a bridge right now or in a federal penitentiary.

PLAYBOY: You eventually found Jason instead. What was your first date?

BEE: We were doing regional children's theater, and he didn't have a car. We didn't know each other that well, but it was convenient for me to drive him. We





found out we had lots of stuff in common, and we mutually asked each other out for dinner. I was really wary of a relationship—I wasn't interested in starting something. At dinner he told me a story about how this girl in his life really liked him but he thought of her only as a friend. I thought he was talking about me. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: *And he wasn't?*

BEE: He was actually trying to tell me that he wasn't interested in this other girl, but his story didn't work. After dinner I drove him home, and when he leaned over to kiss me, I was still in the car. I hit the gas and took off down the street, tires squealing. He was horrified that I took off, and I didn't know what was happening. We've been together since 1997.

PLAYBOY: *And you still like each other.*

BEE: We do. So far, so good. It's because of our centaur role-playing.



MELT WITH YOU

YOU DON'T NEED A BOX OR A RIBBON TO GIFT YOUR GIRL CHOCOLATE THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

Although Forrest Gump's life-is-like-a-box-of-chocolates analogy is sweet, we prefer knowing what we're going to get. Your lady probably does too. Make her something sweet from scratch and you will have full control over the flavor; make her something molten and you will avoid baking, cooling and decorating. Melted chocolate may bring to mind tiered fountains, but we promise these three recipes are a far cry from that cheesy mess. —*Julia Bainbridge*

CHOCOLATE, THREE WAYS

1 Choco Tacos

In his book *Tacos*, Alex Stupak calls for *pasilla* chiles, but the chef at Empellon in New York has blessed our simplified version of his chocolate taco. Break dark chocolate into rough one-inch pieces. Warm some corn tortillas. Immediately place the chocolate pieces on the tortillas—the chocolate will melt a little on contact, hits the heat—and top with a drizzle of olive oil. Season with flaky salt and finish with a sprinkling of cinnamon and chili powder.

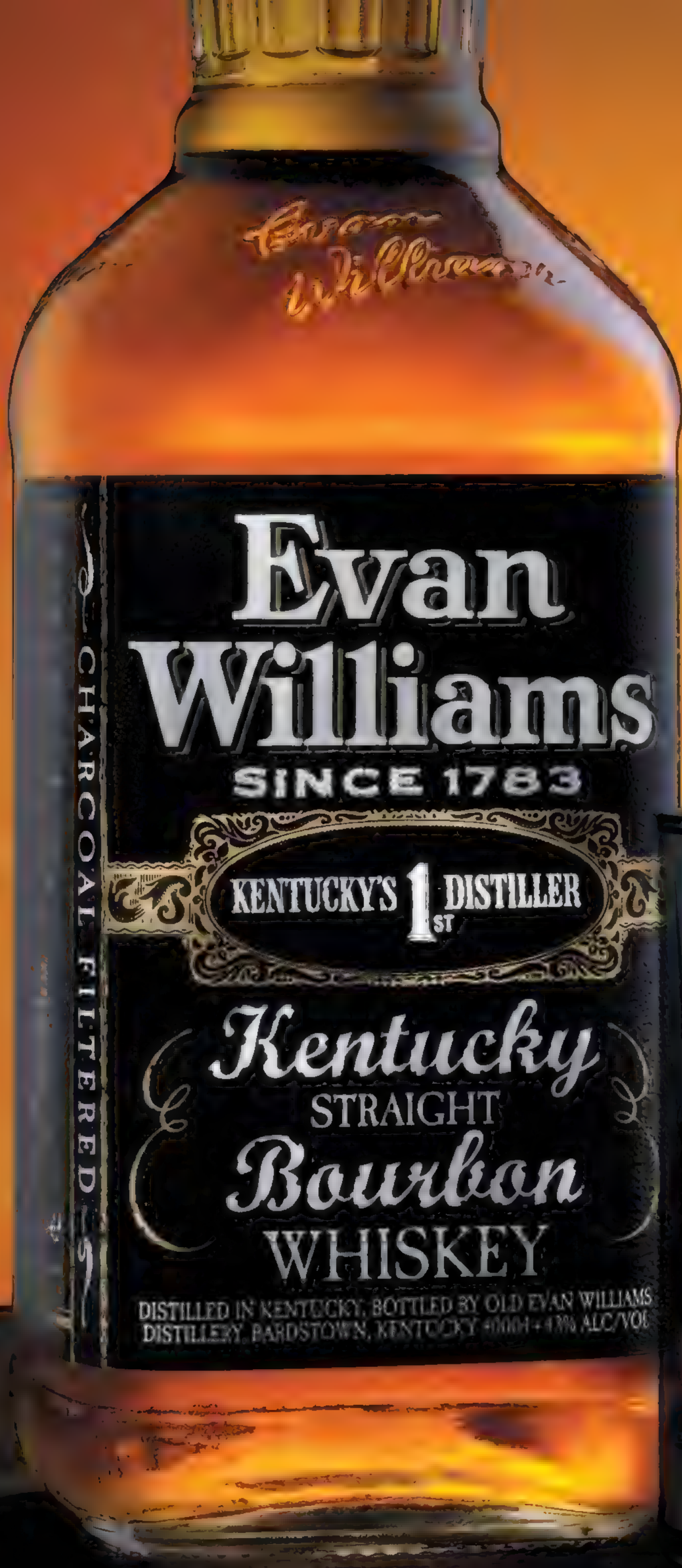
2 Chocolate Pâté

This recipe from Brian Mercury, lead pastry chef at Harvest in Cambridge, Massachusetts, takes a little doing but will blow your girl's mind. Sprinkle two and a half teaspoons powdered gelatin over one third cup heavy cream; let sit. Combine two cups heavy cream, one cup milk, two thirds cup sugar and two pinches salt in a saucepan; bring to a simmer. Add six egg yolks, little by little, to the mixture and cook until thickened. Add gelatin blend and whisk to incorporate. Pour over one pound 70 percent cacao dark chocolate broken into pieces in a bowl. Whisk to combine. Transfer to a small pan; chill to set.

3 Next-Level Nutella

The one hard-to-find but essential item in this recipe from Sarah Hart, owner of Alma Chocolate in Portland, Oregon, is the hazelnut praline paste. Hart likes the stuff from Valrhona, which you can purchase on Amazon. Now to the recipe: In a double boiler, melt four ounces high-quality bittersweet chocolate with one quarter cup cream, four tablespoons hazelnut paste and a shot of bourbon. (Or melt ingredients in a microwave in 10- to 15-second bursts, stirring in between.) Whisk until smooth and shiny; serve immediately with torn baguette pieces.

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WHY YOU SHOULD EMBRACE EFFERVESCENT COCKTAILS ALL YEAR ROUND

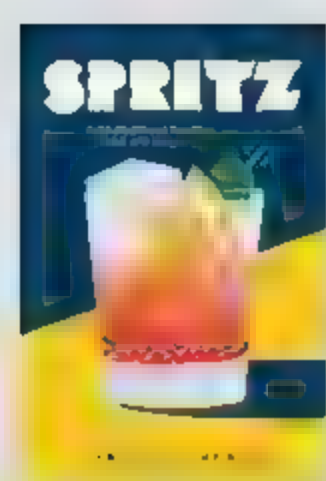
Don't get it twisted: A spritz is not the 1980s blush-wine summer spritzer that might immediately come to mind. As Talia Baiocchi and Leslie Parisseau write in their new book, *Spritz: Italy's Most Iconic Aperitivo Cocktail*, "The modern spritz has its roots in Hapsburg-occupied northern Italy in the 19th century, when Austrian soldiers introduced the practice of adding a spritz (spray) of water to the region's wines in an effort to make them more pleasing to their riesling-weaned palates." And as the recipes in the book show, American craft bartenders from coast to coast have taken the drink and turned it into a more avant-garde concoction, mixing in tonic, shrubs or sherry. Contemporary spritzes usually comprise three parts prosecco, two parts bitter liqueur and one part soda, and while that means they may have a rosy tint, it also means they're slightly bitter, pleasantly low in alcohol and refreshingly drinkable, no matter the weather. Besides, real men drink pink.—*Julia Bainbridge*

SAFE PASSAGE

Kenaniah Bystrom of Essex in Seattle created this spritz. Its salty complexity matches well with the sweet citrus of Aperol and the bitter tinge of Amaro Nardini.

Ingredients
1 oz. Amaro Nardini
¼ oz. Aperol
¼ oz. fresh lemon juice
¼ oz. Castelvetro olive brine
2½ oz. prosecco
2 Castelvetro olives

Directions
Pour Amaro Nardini, Aperol, lemon juice and olive brine into cocktail shaker. Add ice and shake until chilled. Strain into a chilled coupe or cocktail glass. Top with prosecco and garnish with olives.



Spritz hits bookstores in March.

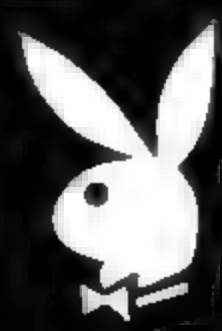
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SNEAKS FOR SNOW

THESE COLD-WEATHER KICKS ARE EQUAL PARTS STURDY AND STYLISH

A seasonal cool is settling in with a fresh batch of sneaker styles that stand up to the elements. Tricking them out with all sorts of high-tech weather-beaters, some sneaker makers are even teaming up with cold-climate wizardry from the likes of Pendleton and Burton. So when you finally have to weather the storm, there's no reason not to get your kicks in too.—

Vincent Boucher



Board Certified

New England stalwarts New Balance both know winter, and now they're unveiling a collab that includes the 710 Vazee Outdoor, a hybrid hiking boot and performance runner that matches up with a corresponding snowboard boot. \$125, newbalance.com

Boss Tweed

→ Stan Smith by Adidas goes year-round in a techno tweed version with metal D-ring lace-ups and toe and heel tabs in contrasting leather. PrimaLoft insulation keeps feet warm and water out, while the rubber outsole promises slip-free footing. \$115, adidas.com



Get a Grip

→ Converse's Tekoa keeps the Chuck Taylor All Star silhouette for its take on a winter-ready lace-up boot. The rubber footbed provides a firm grip, while the rubber overlay help repel water. \$120, converse.com



Blanket Statement

→ Honored tribal wools get a street-worthy rethink in Vans' Sk8-Hi MTE sneaker with the all-weather treatment inside and out, from heat-retention lining to a rubberized sole to gain traction. \$85, vans.com

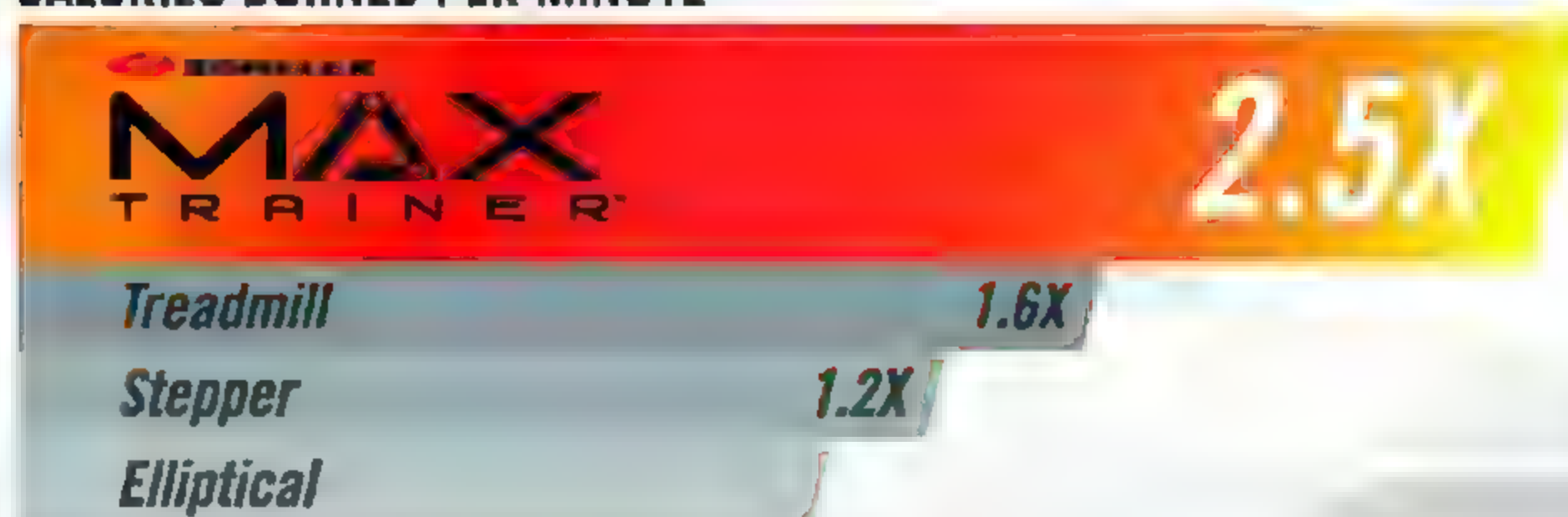


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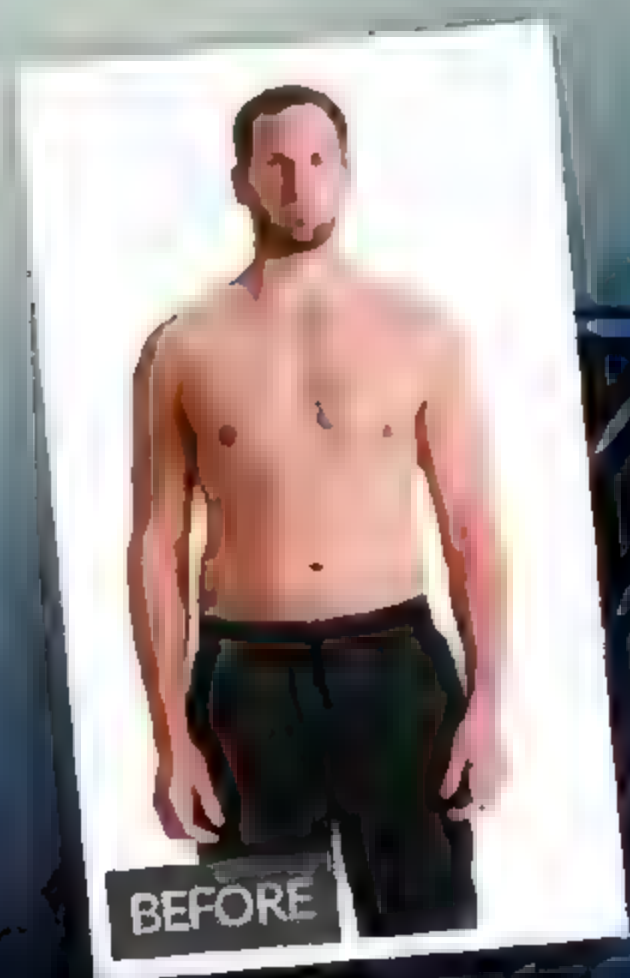
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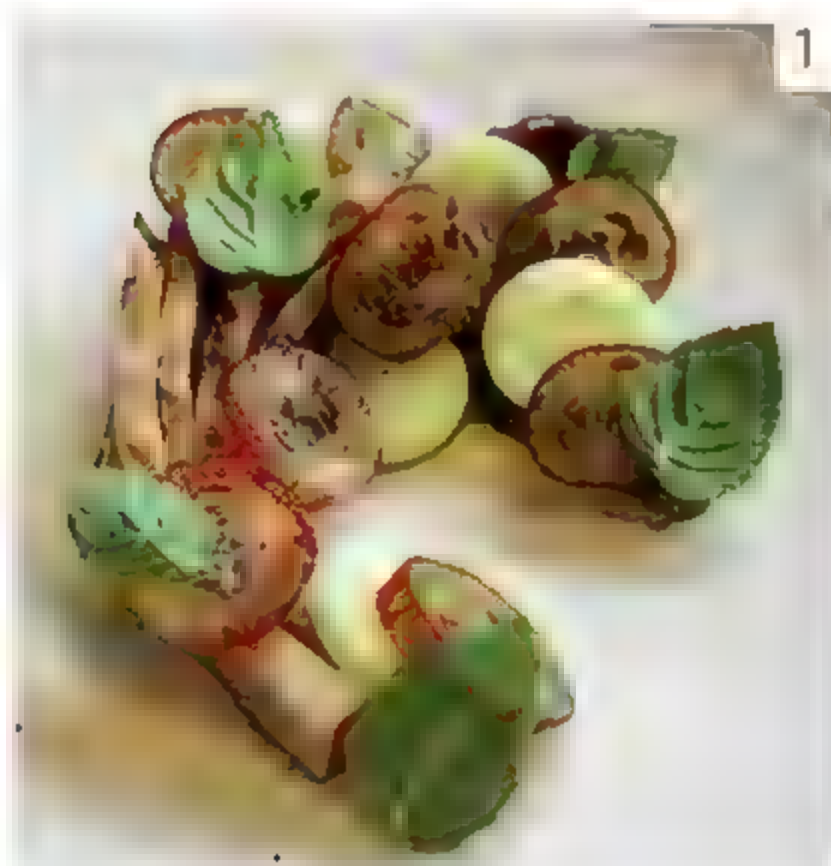
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THE NEW, NEW NORDIC

THERE'S A WORLD OF FUN BEYOND COPENHAGEN'S KILLER FOOD SCENE

Just because Noma, Copenhagen's temple of new Nordic cuisine, is temporarily shutting its doors doesn't mean you need to hold off on visiting this famously foodie city. Chef René Redzepi has inspired an army of Noma alumni to wage their own revolution: Christian Puglisi earned a Michelin star at his restaurant Relæ, staking his reputation on a vegetable-heavy tasting menu (sample dish: celeriac, black olive and seaweed salad). Meanwhile, Samuel Nutter and Victor Wågman take a brave, nose-to-tail approach at their two-story bistro Bror, serving lamb in four courses, beginning with a thinly sliced eye. Their menu also includes a starter of fried bull's testicle. Matt Orlando—Noma's first chef de cuisine—opened his thrilling **Amass** (1) in 2013. At Taller, Karlos Ponte cooks his native Venezuelan cuisine with Nordic ingredients and techniques. Likewise, frustrated by the lack of good Mexican food in Copenhagen, Rosio



Sanchez opened her own taco stand at the Torvehallerne market a few months later, importing dry corn for her tortillas directly from Oaxaca. And that's just dinner. Here's how to dive into the rest of this great Danish city.—*Mickey Rapkin*



COPENHAGEN A Pocket Guide

The Neighborhood

→ Once a dodgy working-class stretch, Nørrebro has been reborn as a playground for bearded artisans and the backdrop to a perfectly curated afternoon. Start with lunch at Manfreds—there's a disco ball in the wine cellar, but the beef tartare is where the party's at. Then caffeinate at the Coffee Collective (an award-winning roaster) before browsing Proper Attire Requested, a

secondhand men's shop with first-rate threads. Stop in for a spell at Crate Beer & Vinyl—which offers exactly that.

The Cocktail Bar

→ Duck and Cover is a place bartenders come to drink. Mix master Kasper Riewe Henriksen left the venerable Ruby in 2012 to open this dark-wood bar where he's constantly tinkering with the menu. Here's a tip: Drink whatever gin cocktail this cat puts in front of you.

The Shop

→ In Copenhagen, even dudes riding bicycles look cool. Perhaps that's because they shop at Han Kjøbenhavn (2), your first stop for monochromatic sweaters, drop-crotch pants in hybrid fabrics and suave overcoats. The sunglasses (roughly \$150) and other accessories—such as the perfect leather-bound laptop case—are classic. You can even buy a Lego set of the United Nations for the kid (or for the kid in you).

The Hotel

→ The Nimb is minimalist Danish-design porn. Installed in a Moorish palace dating from 1909, the hotel's 17 rooms overlook Copenhagen's historic amusement park, Tivoli Gardens. Ride a wooden roller coaster. Sip a negroni beside a roaring fire.

The Barber

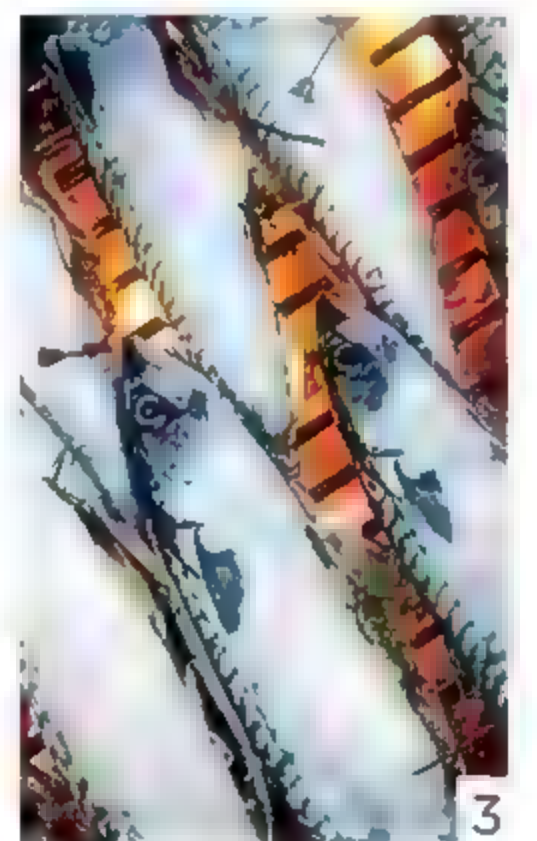
→ Kick it old-school at Barberen i Vognmagergade, a men-only barbershop where the straight-razor shave is as slick as the top-shelf whiskey owner Jonas Shiran Larsen pours in the afternoon.

The Worthy Tourist Trap

→ Take a 20-minute train ride to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, a celebration of Andy Warhol and Max Ernst (among others) set within park-like grounds. Enjoy lunch outside and stare at Sweden across the sound.

The Surprise

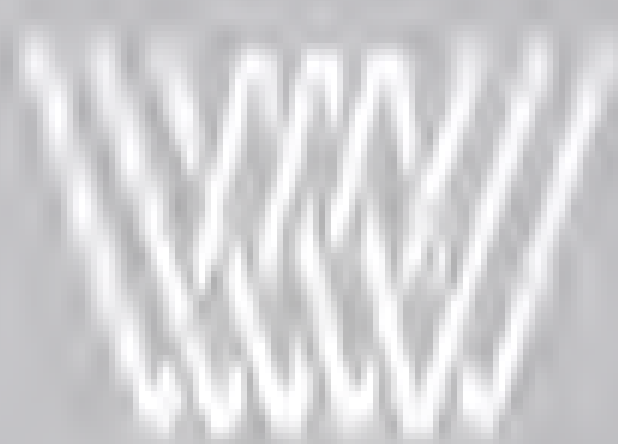
→ On a rooftop farm in an industrial



stretch of town, a husband-and-wife team opened Stedsans (3), a restaurant with just two seatings a night. If you can snag a table, you'll be rewarded with carrots topped with brown butter hollandaise, perfect wine pairings and Instagram bragging rights.



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• Face it, the earbuds that come with the new iPhone suck. They are painful, sound tinny and allow your music to bleed into your surroundings. The best solution for a comfortable fit and discreet, quality listening is to buy custom earphones, but until recently, getting ear tips molded precisely to match your noggin had a four-digit price tag. Now, thanks to new mailable materials and advanced 3-D printing, anyone can order affordable custom-made earbuds, sometimes without even leaving home. —*Corinne Iozzio*

NORMAL

→ Normal (\$199, nrml.com) makes springing for personalized earphones easy. Download the Normal app, capture a few images of your ears, select a color scheme and hit SEND. An engineer converts the images into a 3-D model and sends it to the printer; expect your new buds to arrive in two days or less.

DECIBULLZ

→ Not a fan of strangers or 3-D scanners probing your ears? Decibullz (\$60, decibullz.com) puts the customization completely in your hands. Simply heat up the ear tips in a bowl of warm water to make the plastic pliable, then use your fingers to gently mold them to your ears.

OWNPHONES

→ Want more design control? With OwnPhones (pictured, from \$299, ownphones.com), the company's design tool lets you choose the shape, material, color and embellishment of your pair from more than 10,000 possible combinations. The Bluetooth-enabled buds are 3-D printed to your exact specs.

SNUGS

→ Scoring custom ear molds used to mean meeting with an audiologist and sitting for ages with silicone in your ears. Snugs (from \$149, snugsearphones.com) uses a 3-D scanner to eliminate the middleman. Get fitted with custom buds in under 10 minutes at one of the company's scanning locations.

Illustration by **BRYAN CHRISTIE DESIGN**



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MOVIE OF THE MONTH

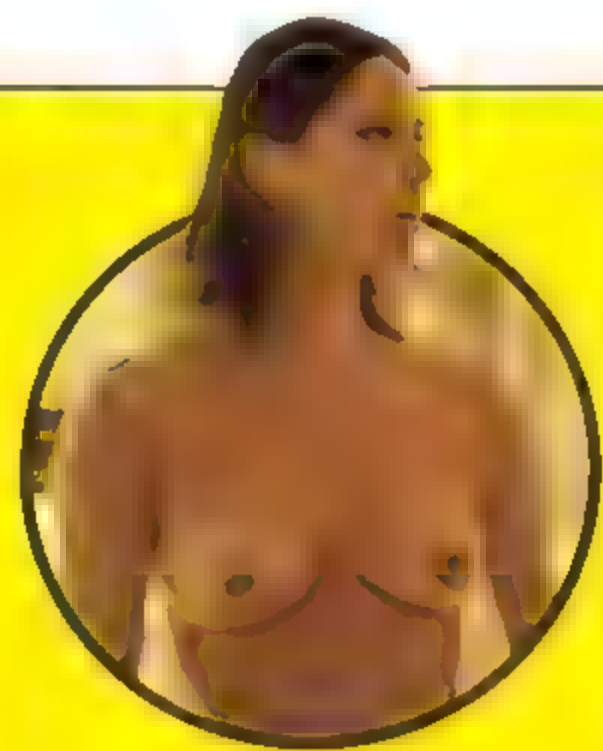
DEADPOOL

By Stephen Rebello

• Are you ready for an R-rated, deeply twisted *X-Men* spin-off in which the disfigured ex-Special Forces hero lets you know he's aware he's a character in a superhero movie and blurts out whatever is on his sardonically funny mind? Then strap in for *Deadpool*, the much-hyped screen version of the Fabian Nicieza–Rob Liefeld Marvel

comic, starring Ryan Reynolds, Morena Baccarin, Ed Skrein and Gina Carano. Reynolds curses as if he's in a Quentin Tarantino movie in the hilarious trailer that has circulated since last year's Comic-Con, promising a superhero experience very different from more family-friendly movies such as *Ant-Man* and even the other *X-Men* installments. "Rather than water down the comic book, they ramped it up and went for it," says co-star T.J. Miller about the Tim Miller-directed movie in which he plays the hero's caustic best friend.

"It's a complex, dense film with comedy so far left of center that it makes fun of comic-book movies. At the same time, it's a satirical superhero comic-book movie itself. It's so original, I compare it to *Blade Runner*—or *Blade Runner* mashed up with a sitcom. It was great fun to improvise with Ryan, except for the times when he was much funnier than me and I'd just get sad and cower in a corner. *Deadpool* is as original, confusing, visceral and hilarious a movie in this genre as you could ever imagine. It's a movie that I'd pay to see."

TEASE
FRAME

Olivia Munn

→ Geek goddess Olivia Munn plays one of the titular character's frequent sex buddies in *Magic Mike* (pictured). See her next as Maya Cruz in *Ride Along 2*, the action-comedy sequel starring Ice Cube and Kevin Hart.

IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

THE X-FILES: THE COLLECTOR'S SET

By Bryan Reesman

• Probably the boldest, most influential 1990s TV series, Chris Carter's weekly phantasmagoria beguiled disciples and unbelievers of unexplained phenomena as obsessed FBI agent Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and skeptical partner Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) battled strange beings, government conspiracies and sexual tension. Despite the show's grim vibe, Carter injected cheeky, self-aware humor—even a few satirical exploits—to take the edge off. It has aged well too. Although the two theatrical movies are not included in this handsomely packaged set, slots are left open for the forthcoming six-part Fox miniseries that airs in January and will eventually

be released on Blu-ray. Hopefully the truth is in there. **Best extras:** The early seasons have been upgraded for our HD world from the original widescreen footage. The set contains more than 23 hours of special features to get you up to speed before the miniseries airs. **★★★★**



ZOO LANDER

2

Fred Armisen plays an outrageous social media expert in the long-awaited sequel



Q: *Zoolander*, Ben Stiller's comedy set in the world of aging, clueless male models, is one of the most quoted flicks of the 2000s. Isn't a 14-years-later sequel risky?

A: I remember seeing *Zoolander* once or twice and laughing a lot. All my decisions come from trust, so "Ben Stiller" was all I needed to know. If it were another group trying to do a sequel, then it wouldn't be for me.

Q: You play an over-the-top millennial social media expert who works for the world's top fashion designer. Was there a lot of improv?

A: I don't like to improvise, really. It would slow everything down if I tried to put my spin on it. On *Portlandia* I can do that because that's my shared house. When it's not my house, it's "Let me just trust what's on the page."

Q: Offscreen, when do you feel at your most male-model-ish?

A: I'm a firm believer in giving people a chance, so I support designers and companies who don't normally do fashion. That's why I try to wear clothes by, you know, Häagen-Dazs, John Deere, Uniroyal Tires, Gibson Guitars and Taco Bell.—S.R.



MUST-WATCH TV

BILLIONS

By Josef Adalian

• Hollywood generally either glamorizes the one percent as capitalist superheroes (*Wall Street*) or vilifies them as nihilistic pigs (*The Wolf of Wall Street*). Showtime's superb new drama *Billions* immediately distinguishes itself by taking a much more measured approach. The setup lends itself to cliché: Righteous U.S. attorney Chuck Rhoades (Paul Giamatti) methodically works to expose the financial trickery of self-made hedge fund mogul Bobby Axelrod (Damian Lewis). In the era of Bernie Sanders, it would have been easy for producers to pick sides. Instead, Giamatti's "hero" is

as conflicted and reckless as any Wall Street cowboy. And while Lewis's Bobby possesses the arrogance and impulsiveness we expect in our billionaires—"What's the point of having fuck-you money if you never say fuck you?" he muses as he ponders a decadent beach home—he is also the kind of good guy who bails out the owner of his favorite pizza place and hands out college scholarships without issuing a press release. Rather than preach, *Billions* is content to (brilliantly) depict how power plays out in the real world. Moral judgments are solely at the discretion of the viewer. ★★★

MUSIC

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

By Rob Tannenbaum

• Even after being acclaimed as one of rock's great songwriters, Lou Reed often recalled the response the Velvet Underground elicited in the late 1960s: "They hated us." As the rest of American culture prattled about the Age of Aquarius, Reed sang of S&M, opiates, matricide, transvestites and self-abuse. Listen closely to *The Velvet Underground: The Complete Matrix Tapes*—four CDs recorded live at a San Francisco club over two nights in November 1969—and you'll hear no more than a few dozen fans in attendance. No wonder Reed quit less than a year later.



But the Velvets play as though they've already been vindicated by history, accelerating from folk-rock strums on "I'm Waiting for the Man" to distorted twin-guitar jousting on a 37-minute version of "Sister Ray." The sound, captured on

a four-track reel-to-reel deck, is magnificent despite some tape hiss and clipping. What comes through isn't the Velvet Underground's influence or importance but the raucous and mischievous fun the band had on stage. ★★★

BOOKS

STORIES I TELL MYSELF

By Cat Auer



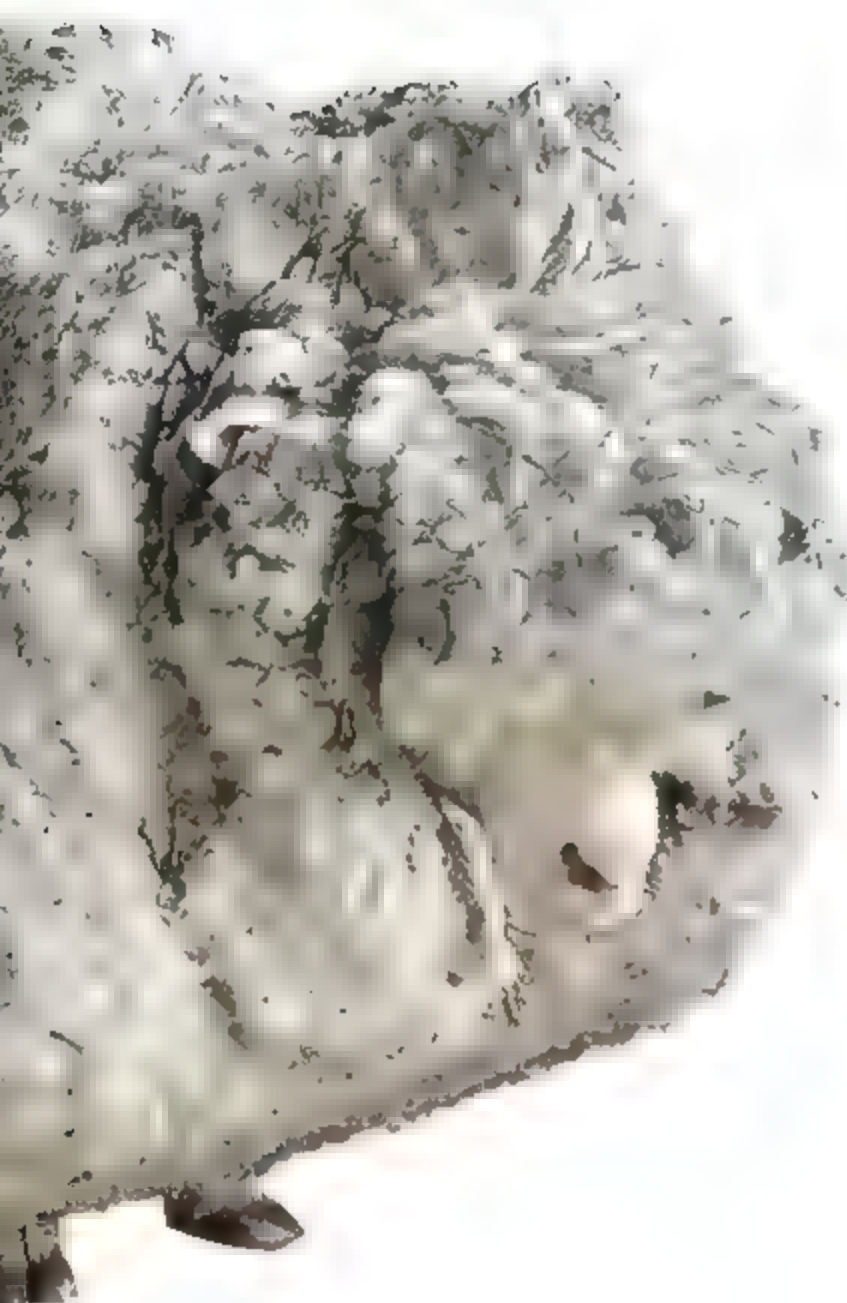
• Hunter S. Thompson (the "outlaw journalist" who provided *PLAYBOY* with acid-laced and coke-caked coverage of deep-sea fishing, among other things) won fame as a no-holds-barred, breakneck writer. Now his son, Juan F. Thompson, attempts to broaden and balance that image by showing him as a father. In his memoir, *Stories I Tell Myself*, wistfulness pervades; there's a sense that Juan started to fully understand his dad only after becoming one himself, just seven years before Hunter's 2005 suicide. Yet with remarks like "Cocaine and booze didn't even qualify as drugs, they were a staple of his daily diet," the book solidifies Hunter's reputation as a gonzo madman—albeit one who grew into a doting grandpa who liked to be called Ace. ★★★

PATIENCE

By Douglas Wolk



• Daniel Clowes's new graphic novel is a time-travel thriller filtered through his own furiously warped sensibility. Seventeen years after his pregnant wife, Patience, is murdered, Jack Barlow stumbles upon a time machine and goes back to 2006 to figure out the secrets of her past so he can rescue her. But Jack, overwhelmed by rage and bitterness, starts losing his mind. (Nobody draws reality curdling around its edges like Clowes, best known for *Ghost World*.) As he dives deeper into Patience's history, the tale grows more wrenching and complicated, and Jack's all-devouring quest for vengeance mutates his story from a sci-fi whodunit to psychedelic psychological horror. ★★★½



90 POUNDS

Weight of the wool sheared off Chris, a merino sheep found wandering in Australia, shattering the previous record of 63 pounds, held by New Zealand's Big Ben.

Hey! I'm in your neighborhood
Wanna hang-out?

Sure, let's watch the game.
And I'm horny.

**What happens after the
benefits run out in a friends-
with-benefits situation?**

According to one study,

35.4%

stayed pals and were just as close
as before their sexual relationship;

31.5%

remained friends but were
less close;

14.6%

were even closer than before;

18.5%

did not remain friends at all.

\$59 BILLION

What Apple would owe
in U.S. taxes if it weren't
holding **\$181 billion** in
offshore accounts.

**I WANT TO
BELIEVE...**

54%

of Americans
believe in
the existence
of intelligent
extraterrestrial
life.

24%

do not.

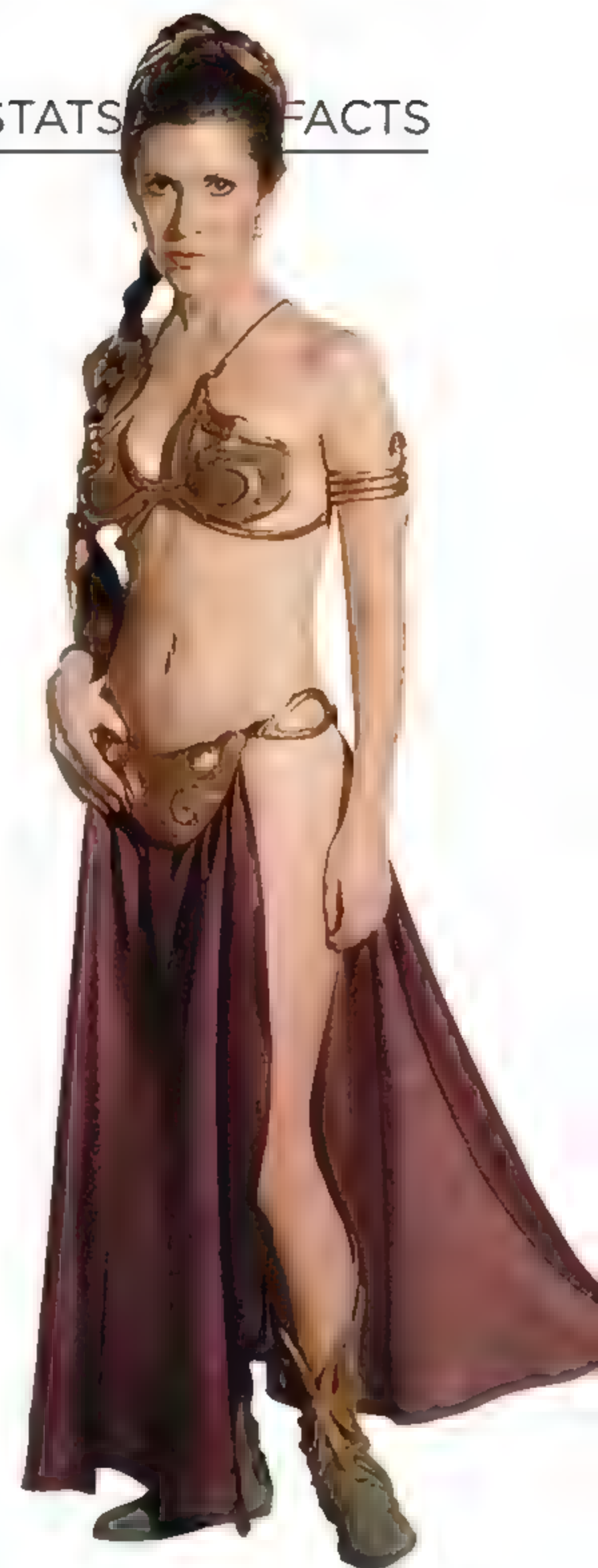
22%

don't know.

A POUND OF FLESH

30%

of millennials
surveyed said
they would sell
one of their
organs if it
would eliminate
their debt.



STAR WORN \$96,000

Winning auction bid
for the bikini-style
"slave" costume
Carrie Fisher wore
as Princess Leia in
Return of the Jedi.

1.25 BILLION

Approximate number of chicken
wings eaten during the 2015 Super
Bowl—enough to wrap around the
Grand Canyon 120 times.



PANTS ON FIRE

The average
American pees four
to eight times a day.

In related news,
a California
State University
researcher found
that lies are more
convincing when
told while fighting
the urge to urinate.

8 BILLION

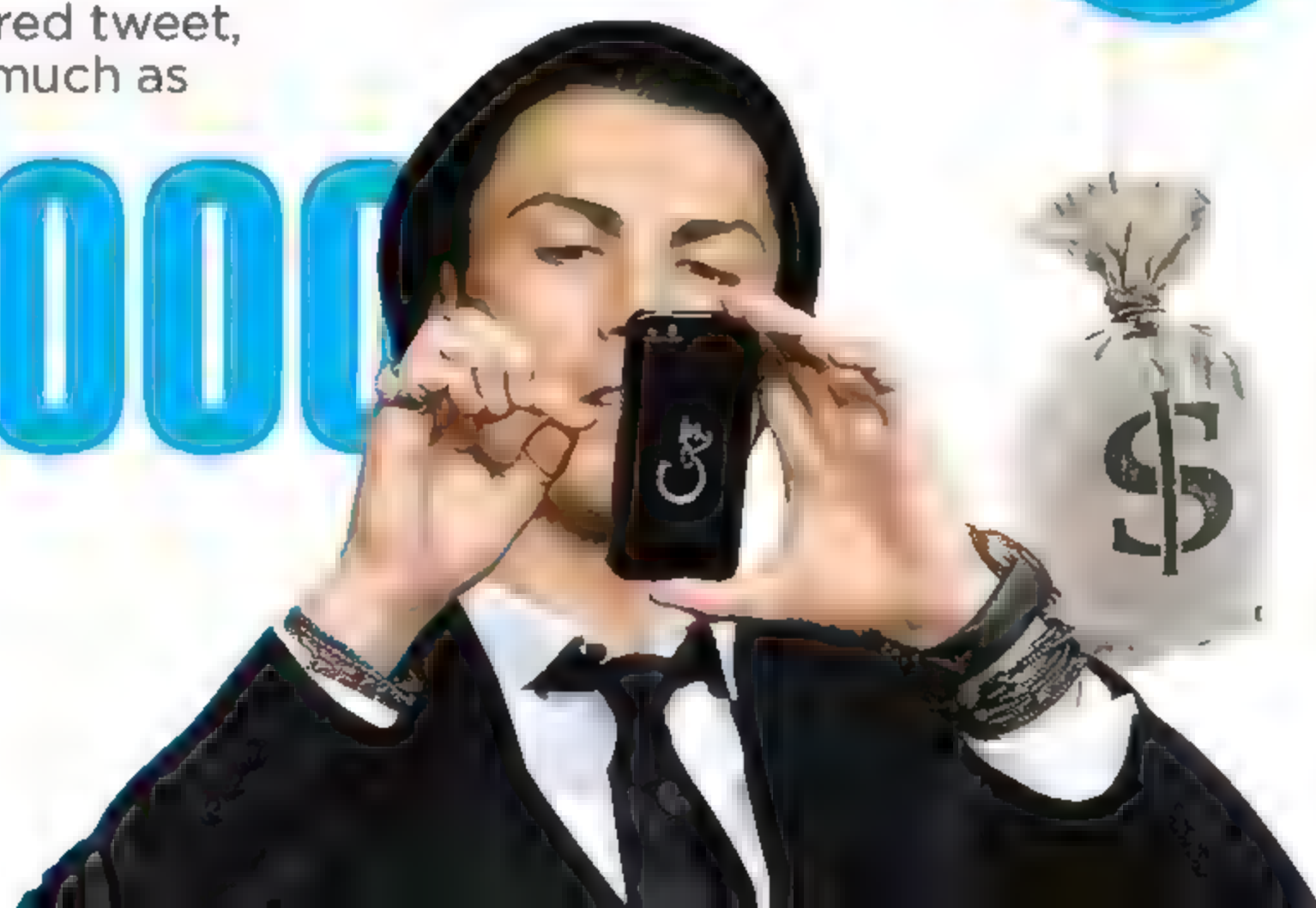


Number of Sweethearts candies
manufactured yearly.

A LITTLE BIRDIE TOLD US

For posting a single sponsored tweet,
Cristiano Ronaldo earns as much as

\$260,000



**Actual FEC-registered candidates
for the 2016 presidential race
and their party affiliations:**

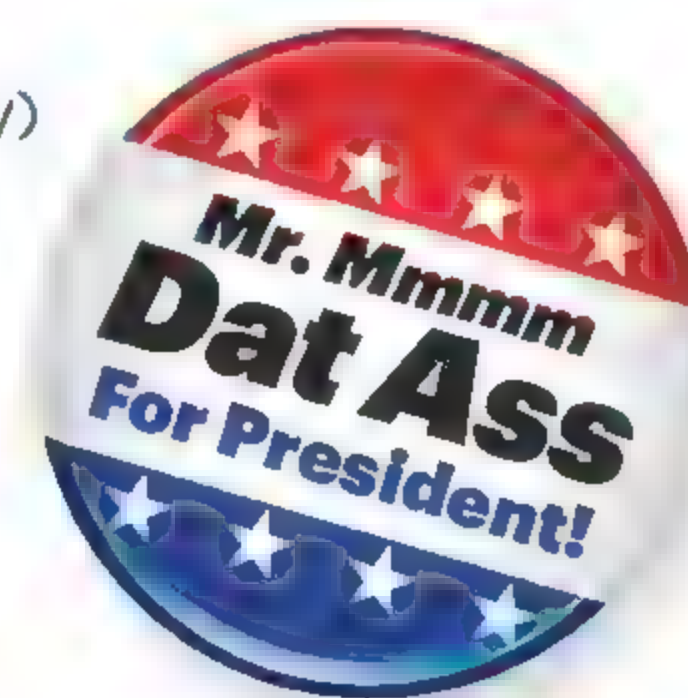
'Murican Cookies
(D.C. Statehood Green Party)

Buddy the Cat
(Democratic)

Frosty Chicken
(Independent)

Mary Jane
(Libertarian)

@lolmynameisjon
(Peace and Freedom)



(Independent)

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The Daniel Steiger



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- Case Depth Approx: 10mm / 0.4in
- Dial Colour: Black with Chequered Pattern
- Case Material: Stainless Steel
- Sub Dials: Day / Seconds / 24hr
- Strap type: Tire Track Black Rubber Strap
- Water Resistance: 5ATMs / 500 metres



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it in ink.

What's the best thing about the Process Centerfold? It's right under your feet – sensational Playboy Playmates graced with some “intimately” placed ink from world-renowned tattoo artist Chris Núñez.

Burton.com

It seems to me that women have gone back and forth between having a bush and being completely bare down there. What determines which look is “in” at any given time? My impression is that Playmates and other models over the past 15 years or so have been relatively free of pubic hair, but in the November 2015 issue of *PLAYBOY*, both the Playmate and the model in the feature pictorial sport sizable bushes, which I consider very sexy. This seems to be a departure from the current norm. What’s causing this?—H.R., Mobile, Alabama

Trends in physical appearance—from grooming to breast size to hairstyles (on top as well as down below)—are both cyclical and unpredictable, making it impossible to definitively predict when or precisely explain why things change. That said, there are some factors we believe influence pubic-hair styles. Throughout the years, one of the biggest determinants has been the shifting size of bikini bottoms. As bikinis got smaller in the 1960s and 1970s, women began to shave or wax larger areas so hair wouldn’t show. The trend toward removing more and more hair evolved in the late 1980s with the arrival in a New York City salon of the Brazilian waxing technique, which temporarily removes all pubic hair. The method became increasingly popular and grew from a metropolitan trend to a nationwide one. Every fashion eventually falls out of favor, so it is no surprise to see the return of the bush. You can blame (or thank) pornography for the shift toward more and bigger bushes on nonporn models. The adult films that proliferate on the internet predominantly feature female performers without a single strand of pubic hair. This trend has been in full force long enough that women who don’t want to be aesthetically associated with adult-film stars now often prefer to have some hair, from a narrow strip known as the French wax up to the fuller coverage of a manicured triangle. Current tastes overall seem to favor a return to natural, unenhanced beauty, after a period that saw an abundance of breast implants and other forms of plastic surgery. It’s highly unlikely we’ll see a return to the full-grown, untrimmed bushes of the early 1970s, but yes, pubic hair is, pun intended, a growing trend.

All my favorite XXX actresses have several scenes that can be downloaded. Unfortunately, I can’t do that because the only computer I have access to is the one I use at work. Do you know of a business that will download the scenes of a par-

PLAYBOY ADVISOR



I recently started dating a woman who gives me no time to get undressed before sex. She’s all over me before I have a chance to take off my socks or even my shirt. Sex like this is shown on TV as if it’s hot, but for me it’s just awkward. It limits what I can do and eliminates foreplay entirely. Part of me worries she doesn’t like my body and doesn’t want to see me naked. Is clothed sex a fetish?—T.T., Tampa, Florida

Just about anything imaginable is a fetish to someone out there, but this sounds more like ambivalence on her part and passivity on yours. Try this: Either talk about it with her or simply take charge and remove your clothes before letting her jump you. It could be that she wants you to act more in control. You might find that fully naked sex is off the charts. Either way, address the dressed sex.

ticular porn star and record them onto a DVD that can be viewed on my television at home?—T.W., Branson, Missouri

Nope. There’s no such thing. We searched the entire internet for you and couldn’t find a single business that specializes in locating free clips of your favorite porn stars and burning them onto DVDs. If you’re interested in viewing scenes of your favorite film stars on a DVD player without paying for it, we suggest you befriend someone who owns a computer with a built-in DVD burner. Buy a blank DVD at an office-supply store, carve out a few hours to search for such clips and do it yourself. But

this is a simple, technologically unchallenging work-around; you can do much better, and for not a ton of money. We live in the golden era of free pornography, so we suggest you save up for your very own Google Chromebook, a net-based laptop that for only \$249 will grant you access to an overwhelming amount of adult material.

I’ve recently gotten into the specialty coffee habit. This can get pretty expensive, so I usually save my leftovers for reheating later, with disappointing results. Why does coffee that’s been microwaved never taste as good as freshly brewed joe? It seems a whole lot less flavorful than, say, reheated spaghetti and meatballs.—H.B., Cayucos, California

Much of what we consider the most flavorful elements in coffee come from volatile organic compounds in the bean. An unroasted coffee bean contains about 300 such compounds. A roasted bean can contain up to 1,000, but these compounds begin to disappear shortly after roasting; then, brewing releases even more compounds, at a faster rate, which means the fresher the better at every step of the process. The most complex and delicious cup of coffee would be made from freshly roasted, freshly ground beans that are then brewed immediately before the coffee is to be consumed. The quickest way to kill the flavors in a cup of coffee is to microwave it. Microwaving heats the compounds and releases the last of them, making for a flat-tasting cup.

My wife is unpredictably amorous. She will often be completely uninterested in sex for up to two months at a time, then suddenly become horny and then just as suddenly return to not being interested, again for weeks at a time. I would gladly have sex every day, but she almost never wants to. I have a big penis, and she says it hurts when we have sex.

I usually don’t even get the head in. We’ve used lube, which helps but doesn’t work as well as her natural lube when she’s excited. What can we do to improve our sex life?—B.D., Bridgeport, West Virginia

The fact that her natural lubricant works better than store-bought lube leads us to believe your wife isn’t sufficiently aroused when you try to have intercourse. As you say, she’s usually not excited. When sex does work for you, it’s probably not simply due to her natural lubricant; most likely it’s also because she’s more engaged, more relaxed and basically more open to your large penis

as a result. Practice makes perfect, so make a point of committing to being regularly intimate in a way that's not so much about penetration as it is about enjoying each other's bodies. Don't rush; don't pressure her or yourself. Play with foreplay. Allow her to be on top and to determine the rhythm when it comes time to have intercourse.

As a newlywed in my 40s, I'm having problems keeping up with my younger bride. A few years ago I suffered some trauma to my penis, and now it just doesn't work right. I have a hard time maintaining an erection. She didn't want to have sex until after we married, and I think she's now disappointed. She wants to have children and is already talking about in vitro fertilization because sex isn't happening. Is it possible to have a happy marriage without sex, or am I in trouble?—J.G., Santa Rosa, California

It's less about what goes on in your head and more about how you handle it in the sack. Don't get ahead of yourself and write sex off entirely (ever). It's still early in your marriage. You can get an erection. Your wife wants sex. She wants to have kids. These are all good things. Now let's focus on what you can improve, category by category. You don't mention whether you've received treatment for your condition, so first make sure to explore all possible options with a urologist. At least you can get an erection, however fleeting, which leads us to hope there are ways to maintain it medically. Regarding your wife's possible sexual disappointment, a sex therapist can help the two of you come up with ways to be intimate that don't involve full penetration. Even without a sex therapist's advice you can fool around, and you can satisfy your wife orally or with your hands. If in the future you can't keep an erection, there are many aids out there to help with arousal and sexual satisfaction that don't involve classic intercourse. Our society tends to overvalue penis-in-vagina sex, when in reality there's a world of pleasure beyond that. As far as in vitro goes: If that's the only way she can get pregnant, then so be it. Be grateful for her fertility. This is all a long way of saying: There's hope for you and your marriage.

Can a penis become smaller due to nonuse? I understand the mechanics of erections, and I believe mine got larger because of all the attention from my incredibly sexy wife over the many years of our relationship. She died six years ago, and I've had infrequent sexual relations since. Now when I look down I think I'm seeing a smaller penis. Is this possible?—D.P., Farmingdale, New York

Yes, a penis can get smaller from disuse, as any muscle can. Your penis needs regular "workouts," so to speak, to maintain its ability to become and remain erect. But the workout needn't involve actual sex or masturbation; an erection alone is enough to keep your penis in shape. If you're physically and psychologically healthy and have the usual nocturnal erections that most men experience

(and sometimes wake up with, à la "morning wood"), then chances are your penis is getting the exercise it needs. However, there's not a lot of evidence out there that shows men's penises shrink with age. Have you considered the possibility that your belly has gotten bigger than it was six years ago and your penis just appears smaller in comparison?

Earlier this year I realized I was interested in purchasing men's thong underwear. However, I had no luck finding a brick-and-mortar store that sells it. I looked on Amazon, but the only options were weird styles that came in confusing Asian sizes. I then checked Macy's website and found Calvin Klein thongs, which I bought and love; they're so comfortable. Do you know of any other sites I can check out? I'd like to get a drawerful.—T.C., Washington, D.C.

You can buy yourself an entire walk-in closet's worth at MensUnderwearStore.com, which at press time stocked nearly 140 styles of men's thong underwear.

I have two questions about tipping. First, what is an appropriate gratuity for a hotel chambermaid? Should the tip be a flat rate per night, or should it be based on the cost of the room? I'm talking about standard rooms, not suites. Should the tip be the same in a low-budget highway motel as in an expensive upscale resort? Second, when dining out, I've always felt that a 20 percent gratuity for food service is the least I can give for the hard work the waitstaff does. More food ordered translates to more service provided, which I am happy to pay for. I'm conflicted when it comes to wine service, however. Should the tip on a \$300 bottle of wine be 10 times as much as on a \$30 bottle even though no additional service, such as decanting, is provided? The common thread between these questions is: Should a gratuity be based on the amount of service provided or on the cost of the product?—K.M., Hartsdale, New York

The last time we ventured into the tricky subject of tipping, we got some pretty heated mail from readers, and we expect the same this time around. We wish we could answer your question simply, but tipping has proven itself to be a subject open to eternal debate. Some people apply flat formulas across all types of service, while others have a different rationale depending on what is provided. The economics of motels versus resorts (or the cost of living in motel towns versus the cost of living in resort towns) is just one factor that begins to get at the complexity of the issue. So, as we basically said last time: Don't be a jerk. Lean toward tipping too much rather than too little, and be decent, generous and kind. On the hotel front: Go by the size of the room, as a bigger room requires more cleaning. If you want to tip by the day, try five bucks per day for a single room, \$10 for a king, \$20 for a suite and \$25 for a cabana. Or maybe we're being cheap. We agree that

20 percent is a good and proper tip; we consistently tip that much and have never been met with disappointment, disapproval or bad service upon returning to the establishment. Moreover, we tip 20 percent whether the wine is \$300 or \$30. If you can afford to tip generously (or even ask questions about what to tip on \$300 bottles of wine), keep it up and feel confident you've been a good customer. Bad tippers typically have bad attitudes, and we've found the world regularly dispenses its own karmic justice to punish them. We realize that's completely irrational but also sort of true. Are you a bad tipper? Do you feel your blood boiling as you compose an outraged letter in response to our answer? That's karma. As for us, we feel pretty relaxed all the time, we try to always be nice and as a result we tend to get nice treatment in return.

I'm 72 years old; since I started using Viagra I've noticed my penis has a bend in it. My wife asked me what's going on. I watch mature porn and have noticed a lot of other guys have the same problem. Is this caused by taking Viagra?—J.A., Garden City, South Carolina

You should go to the doctor to rule out Peyronie's disease, which causes one side of the penis to contract and the other to lengthen, resulting in curvature. Most penises have a slight bend; perhaps the firm erections caused by Viagra are simply making your natural curve more noticeable.

I'm writing in response to the letter from P.L. in Iowa, whose girlfriend had a problem with him reading PLAYBOY (October). I'm a happily married straight woman and proud to say that PLAYBOY has been a part of my life for many years, thanks to my brothers and brothers-in-law. When I met the man who is now my husband of 15 years I was thrilled to see that he had a subscription. He has asked me over the years if I would like him to drop it, and I keep answering, emphatically, no. PLAYBOY is consistently intelligent, informative and fun. Sorry, P.L., I can't say your girlfriend is "smart." Rather, she's closed-minded and judgmental. We will always welcome PLAYBOY in our home. We share our old issues with friends, and they—both men and women—are happy to receive them.—P.P., Payson, Arizona

We thank you and your extended—and very wise—family for your continued loyalty. It's because of subscribers like you that we have a little saying around here in regard to reader correspondence: "We read it for the compliments."

For answers to reasonable questions relating to food and drink, fashion and taste, and sex and dating, write the Playboy Advisor, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or e-mail advisor@playboy.com. The most interesting and pertinent questions will be presented in these pages each month.





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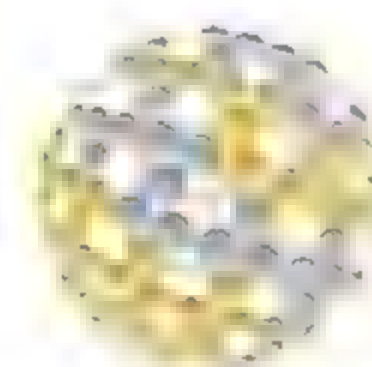
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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: RON HOWARD

A candid conversation with the director formerly known as Opie about how nice guys can be tough, the joys of being a chameleon and the magic of Arrested Development

Funny how everybody thinks they really know Ron Howard. Even in the impersonal hustle of the Tribeca, New York City complex where Howard is editing one new movie while overseeing the 3-D conversion of another, strangers do smiling double-takes, shoot him a thumbs-up or shout something nice about his work. That's the kind of response a guy is likely to elicit if he first gained fame as a child actor on a 1960s TV series as beloved as *The Andy Griffith Show*, on which Howard played Opie, the spunky, red-haired, gap-toothed young son of a small-town Southern sheriff, for eight years. Between TV seasons Howard earned even more goodwill for his roles in high-profile movies including the big-screen version of the Broadway blockbuster *The Music Man* and the family comedy *The Courtship of Eddie's Father*.

In 1968, when Opie caught his last fish, Howard bucked the grim career odds faced by most childhood stars. He successfully transitioned to teenage roles and found his footing in director George Lucas's 1973 box-office hit, *American Graffiti*, set in the 1950s. The following year he landed another iconic gig, as Richie Cunningham on the long-running series *Happy Days*, a role he played until 1980. Somehow he accomplished all this without be-

coming, like other, less-canny child actors, a burnout, a statistic or a punch line.

Acting roles kept finding him (including in the melancholy 1976 John Wayne Western *The Shootist*, for which Howard earned a Golden Globe nomination), but he then managed an even more unlikely career turn: In 1977, after writing and shooting a number of short films, Howard convinced legendary B-movie producer Roger Corman to finance his directing debut, *Grand Theft Auto*, a low-budget, high-octane chase film. That experience led to Howard directing several successful TV movies, paving the way to his 1982 breakthrough, *Night Shift*, starring Michael Keaton and Henry Winkler, the latter Howard's co-star and close friend from *Happy Days*. From there, he helmed sometimes prestigious, often award-winning but almost always popular movies including *Parenthood*, *Apollo 13*, *Cinderella Man*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *The Da Vinci Code* and *Frost/Nixon*. He is also co-chair, with Brian Grazer, of Imagine Entertainment.

Howard was born Ronald William Howard in Duncan, Oklahoma on March 1, 1954 to actress Jean Speegle Howard and actor-director-writer Rance Howard. In 1958 the family relocated to Hollywood and, the year after, welcomed Howard's only sibling and

fellow actor-to-be, Clint Howard. Billed as "Ronny Howard," the young actor first appeared, along with his dad, in 1956's *Frontier Woman*. At five, he co-starred with Andy Griffith on a 1960 episode of *The Danny Thomas Show* that led to the launch of *The Andy Griffith Show* that same year. Howard worked so steadily that much of his early education came from tutors at Desilu Studios. He married Cheryl Alley in 1975 and raised four kids, now grown: actress Bryce Dallas, twins Paige Carlyle (also an actress) and Jocelyn Carlyle, and Reed Cross.

Playboy sent Contributing Editor **Stephen Rebello**, who last interviewed Christoph Waltz, to track down Howard in New York City. Reports Rebello: "What a kick, and a relief, to discover the cold steel and humor under Ron Howard's famed affability. Sure, he displays that guarded, held-in-check quality that marks many former child actors, but he also has a generosity of spirit and a willingness to show vulnerability that reveal a real talent—and a guy you'd invite to your poker game."

PLAYBOY: The 22 films you've directed since 1976, including *Splash*, *Cocoon*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons* and *Cinderella Man*, have grossed more than



"When people question if I'm not edgy enough, yeah, that sort of bugs me. I don't need to delude or baby myself. I do edgy material if I connect with the story. I wouldn't do it as an exercise to prove anything to those bastards."



"Even when I get angry it's pretty quiet. If arrogance, lack of commitment, lack of preparation and lack of respect go hand in hand, then I'm going to have a conversation with that person and they're not going to be happy."



"I'm basically an introvert and not very ambitious socially. My dad held me on a tight leash. He was very controlling about where I went, to a frustrating degree. Although I never really rebelled, there was a lot of tension."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GAVIN BOND

\$3.5 billion internationally. *Apollo 13* was nominated for nine Oscars, including for best picture, in 1996. You won a best directing Oscar in 2002 for *A Beautiful Mind*, which also won for best picture. You were nominated again for best director in 2008, for *Frost/Nixon*. Actors including Russell Crowe, Paul Giamatti, Dianne Wiest, Ed Harris, Kathleen Quinlan, Don Ameche and Jennifer Connelly have received Oscar nominations for their performances in your movies, the latter two going on to win in the best supporting category. That's major success by anyone's standards. How do you react when some knock you for directing expertly crafted crowd-pleasers in which it's tough to detect a personal signature or style?

HOWARD: For 17 out of 20 years, from the age of six to 26, I was an actor on one of three television series. Our entire job was to do the same story, same tone, over and over. That didn't appeal to me anymore. Early in my career as a director I realized I didn't want to brand myself for the sake of marketability or commerciality. The directors I loved, like Billy Wilder and Howard Hawks, made all kinds of movies. I wanted to throw myself into projects that I connected with personally but did *not* want to put a stamp on those movies. Fans, though, and in particular reviewers and interviewers, are always dying to find a thread, always searching for a brand.

PLAYBOY: Most of your movies are seen as fundamentally optimistic and even sentimental. Are you ever drawn to darker material?

HOWARD: Let me tell you about a test screening of *Apollo 13*. The audience scores were great across the board, but one person out of 350 scored the movie "poor." Of course that was the card I wanted to go to first. This 22-year-old guy who hated the movie didn't realize it was a true story. He wrote about the ending, "Terrible. More Hollywood bullshit. The astronauts would never survive." That's the beauty of doing a true story: Facts are stranger than fiction. By God, in real life those chutes *did* open and the people in mission control wept. But if I'd created that same ending for *Apollo 13*, they'd say, "Oh, there goes Ron Howard being sentimental again."

I had the chance to buy *Gone Girl*, and my agent really pressed me on it. I have to say I was intrigued, yet I didn't quite get it. But I thought the director, David Fincher, completely nailed it.

PLAYBOY: So *Gone Girl* fell into the category of material you didn't connect with personally?

HOWARD: It was a fun, cool book, but I worried that audiences would see the big turn, the revelation, coming. I watched the movie and said, "Damn, that's exactly what I didn't trust would work, and yet it did." Put it this way: Do I want to see Quentin Tarantino, whom I adore,

make a straight thriller like *Marathon Man*, a movie I adore? I enjoy going to a movie to hear Quentin's voice loud and clear. Wes Anderson, the same kind of thing. I'm not Kubrick. I'm not an auteur with a single vision. I decided to go this other way in my career. Some actors are known for being chameleons, and that's kind of what I am as a director. I take pride in that.

PLAYBOY: You must have noticed when your name gets mentioned alongside a big project, as it did years ago with Stephen King's fantasy-sci-fi-horror-Western series *The Dark Tower*, anonymous internet pundits will sometimes post things like "Ron Howard was the best you could do?"

HOWARD: I'm not past noticing that. I know the naysayers are out there. I'll occasionally indulge in checking out that stuff in print or on the internet. I'm not sure this is healthy, but I once read in a *Sports Illustrated* article that during

*I had the idea
the Arrested
Development
narration
should sound
like a program
about aborig-
inal people.*

Michael Jordan's string of championships, almost every time he'd go to an away game he'd pick some negative quote about him from a player or a journalist, copy it and stick it on his locker. Just before the game, he'd glance at it. It was like fuel to him. That's probably the way I feel about the naysayers.

PLAYBOY: Even with all your awards, accolades, industry clout and financial success, critics get to you?

HOWARD: When people question if I'm too soft or not edgy enough, yeah, that sort of bugs me. Maybe they're not looking at movies I've made like *The Missing* or moments in *Ransom*. I'm as intense as the story needs to be. If I get a hurtful review, my wife and my daughter Bryce, who is so emotionally tough and very much like me, will say, "Why do you even acknowledge that? Look what you've achieved. Look what you're in the middle of achieving." I've had direc-

tor friends tell me, "Have people filter just the glowing reviews." I tried that for one movie but thought, This is bullshit. I don't need to delude or baby myself. I do edgy material if I connect with the story. I wouldn't do it as an exercise to prove anything to those bastards—because I probably wouldn't prove anything except maybe prove them right. It's thrilling and gratifying to do something like *Frost/Nixon*, which isn't for everybody, but to do a big, popular entertainment that's supposed to be for everybody? That's a particular kind of high-wire act.

PLAYBOY: You don't have a reputation for being a tyrant on the set, but few people attain your level of success by being pussycats. What sets you off?

HOWARD: Even when I get angry it's pretty quiet. What angers me is disrespect for the medium and the process. Or taking my good nature for granted—that stirs resentment. I don't like arrogance. If arrogance, lack of commitment, lack of preparation or lack of respect go hand in hand, then I'm going to have a conversation with that person and they're not going to be happy with my point of view. The beauty of directing a movie is that I don't have to live with these people forever and they don't have to live with me. It'd be nice if we had affection for each other when the project is over, but it's the least important thing.

PLAYBOY: It's probably inevitable that certain segments of the public still want to think of you as Opie or as Richie Cunningham on *Happy Days*. Does a good-guy screen image hurt you in the entertainment business?

HOWARD: There was a time when I felt threatened by that. I didn't want potential collaborators to have a reductive view of what I could bring to a movie project. I remember having a quiet lunch with Robert De Niro when I was trying to recruit him for *Backdraft*. Somebody came up and said, "Hey, Richie, I just love it when you go on the show with Laverne and Shirley," then walked away. De Niro sort of smirked and said, "Well, what are you going to do?" He did the movie. I only wanted to earn the respect of the best and the brightest, the collaborators I wanted to work with. Everything else, I can't control.

PLAYBOY: When you were working steadily as a kid on late-1950s TV series including *The Twilight Zone*, *Dennis the Menace* and *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, was that your choice?

HOWARD: I was blessed with superstar parents. My father, Rance, and mother, Jean Speegle Howard, were both actors. They weren't stage parents at all, but they got me into acting, and I clearly liked it. My mom was very charming, more emotional than my dad, and someone who knew how to dream and love the dream. She was from a small town, Duncan, Oklahoma, and Dad grew up on a farm. They met and fell in love in

the acting program at the University of Oklahoma. When I was a baby and we moved from Oklahoma to California, my mom couldn't take the constant rejection of show business, but she worked, mostly on TV, until the late 1990s. She battled heart disease and died in 2000. Dad remarried—another fantastic lady—and he's not only still a working actor but a gifted writer and teacher and a brilliant father, particularly for that era. He's a thoughtful, pragmatic guy who always demystified the business for me and was always on the set to watch out for me.

PLAYBOY: You pretty much grew up on *The Andy Griffith Show*. How do you recall the star himself?

HOWARD: Andy was a very ambitious guy, a careerist who was serious about what was and wasn't good. He'd fight to kill jokes, saying, "That belongs on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. We're not making fun of country people; we're letting country people be funny." I once asked him if I should do a variety-show guest shot, and he said, "Ronny, almost every decision you make is a career decision. You've got to weigh that."

PLAYBOY: Before doing your series, Griffith was a Broadway star. He also gave a lacerating performance in the Elia Kazan-directed movie *A Face in the Crowd*, playing an opportunistic drifter who becomes a dangerous right-wing demagogue. Did he ever give you the sense that he thought his career could have gone in other directions?

HOWARD: Every once in a while he would allude to having been emotionally beaten up by Kazan in that Actor's Studio kind of way. That was not something he enjoyed. He didn't like exposing himself in that way. *A Face in the Crowd* wasn't a successful movie. He was proud of his performance, but he wasn't nominated for an Oscar and the movie didn't make a lot of money. Again, as a careerist, I think he wanted to be in comedy and felt his place was on television.

PLAYBOY: Some have said that Griffith and actress Frances Bavier, who played Aunt Bee on the show, weren't exactly bosom buddies. What's the truth?

HOWARD: The set was raucous and playful, and Frances was a sophisticated New Yorker from the theater. Andy and the makeup guy, Lee Greenway, constantly played guitar and banjo, and Don Knotts always sang. Frances was never one of them, but she was never a bitch on wheels or anything. She was probably always sort of an introvert and a bit overwhelmed. The one time I heard her complain, we were shooting in a bus in the San Fernando Valley and it was really hot. She stood up and said to the director, "Can we please shoot this soon, before I melt?" When she retired, she went to Siler City, North Carolina and became a lady who never left her house full of antiques and cats. She did tell Andy later in her life that she regretted if she was ever distant from him.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever feel you were being heard on the show?

HOWARD: On rehearsal day of the second episode of the second season, when I had just turned seven, I was supposed to open the door of the sheriff's office, come running in as Opie often did and say a line. I told the director, "I don't think this is the way a kid would say this." I pitched my spin on the line and the director said, "That sounds good, Ronny. Why don't you say it that way?" I must have stood there smiling, because when Andy said, "What are you grinning for, young'un?" I said, "That's the first suggestion of mine they've taken." He said, "Well, it was the first one that was any damn good. Now let's rehearse." That moment shaped my whole approach. I not only felt credible but I got the sense that this was the way creative problems could be solved.

PLAYBOY: Were you prepared for the show going off the air in 1968?

HOWARD: Even though it was the coun-

*Around 15 or
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I began to feel a
real sense of loss
and betrayal.*

try's number one show in that last season, part of the reason Andy closed it down was because he got a movie contract with Universal. He was going to try to have a successful run in comedies like Don Knotts had done with *The Incredible Mr. Limpet* and *The Reluctant Astronaut*. Don could go to a broad, zany place very comfortably. It didn't work out for Andy. **PLAYBOY:** Things can get rough for child actors when they hit puberty. How did you survive?

HOWARD: Around 15 or 16, I stopped getting hired. For the first time in my life I went about nine months without a job, a long time for someone who'd worked steadily from the age of four. I began to feel a real sense of loss and betrayal. It's a common thing for child actors to go through. I'd seen my dad struggle without ever reaching the stardom he dreamed of, yet he was always able to grind out a good living. I realized that's the way the real world works when you're not Opie on the number one sitcom anymore.

PLAYBOY: But you showed up on *Gentle Ben*, *Gunsmoke*, *Lassie* and other series, which made you luckier than many other child actors transitioning to teen roles. Then you played two memorable high school good guys, in *American Graffiti* and on *Happy Days*. What was your own high school experience like?

HOWARD: By that age I was in public school in Burbank. I was a freak, the butt of a lot of jokes, bullying and all kinds of shit. I'm basically an introvert and not very ambitious socially. Even so, my dad was very conservative and held me on a tight leash. He was very controlling about where I went, to a frustrating degree. Although I never really rebelled, there was a lot of tension.

PLAYBOY: How bad did the bullying get?

HOWARD: Nobody ever punched me in the mouth or anything, but there was a lot of posturing, name calling and laughing, particularly when I'd come back to school after working on a show or movie. I was on the basketball team, and when we'd go to an away game and I was at the foul line shooting a free throw, it wasn't unusual for the opposing band to strike up the *Andy Griffith Show* theme song and for them to scream, "Miss it, Opie!" I always played better away, so maybe something about that was fueling me. Maybe that's why today I'm willing to go on the internet and read what's being said about me. Maybe that's some masochistic tendency or bad pattern that goes back to those days.

PLAYBOY: Were you ever tempted to go full badass big-time TV and movie star on those people who gave you grief?

HOWARD: Fuck them and their sense of what I was supposed to be. Those assholes would come up to me and say stuff like "Hey, movie star, where's your car?" When it came time for me to buy a car, I bought a VW because the cliché would have been for me to drive a Camaro. My natural personality and the example set for me by my dad—and by anybody I'd ever been around professionally—made me never want to play into the cliché.

PLAYBOY: In the 1970s, lots of people, including many young TV and movie actors, drank and experimented with drugs. Did you partake?

HOWARD: I was pretty scared of drugs, and my dad wouldn't let me go to "those" parties—which chafed at me. My younger brother, Clint, fell into a whole partying thing, though he's many decades sober now. I'm lucky I wasn't drawn toward rebellion in that form or to complying with a social group I felt I needed to be part of. I was blessed to have met my wife-to-be, Cheryl, in high school when we were 16.

PLAYBOY: Do you ever feel lucky that you were a young actor before the days of social media and tabloid TV?

HOWARD: Very much so. I won't give you any specific examples of what I'm glad nobody photographed, but there would have been some explaining to do. And

when that explanation has to be public, it can endure in very hurtful ways.

PLAYBOY: How'd you lose your virginity?

HOWARD: I'd literally been on only three or four dates before I met Cheryl, so it was with her, as you would expect. And it was in a fantastic, exploratory way.

PLAYBOY: How old were you?

HOWARD: We were teens. We probably hadn't talked about marriage, but we were in love and committed to each other. It wasn't gawky, goofy exploratory stuff—though it *was* gawky and goofy. Once my dad saw that we were in a long-term relationship he gave me *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex but Were Afraid to Ask*. We had a lot of fun exploring that, and it was one hell of an education, like, *Hmmm*, how would this work?

PLAYBOY: Are you a romantic?

HOWARD: I just kind of blurted out my marriage proposal on a freeway off-ramp. I did no romantic preparation. I had no ring tucked away in a cupcake. Cheryl was studying at Cal State Northridge, and when I'd asked her a couple of times before, she'd turned me down, saying she'd be open to it when she was about to graduate. When I finally had the nerve, I just asked, and she said yes. She also said, "God, my hair isn't even washed." We married at 21 and continue to have a rich romantic life and a rewarding, gratifying relationship. If you're in love and committed to each other, you have to be ready to weather some turbulence and know that's part of navigating a long-term relationship. I don't believe in any of that "stay together for the kids" bullshit. I never assumed our relationship would last forever, just like I never assumed Brian Grazer and I would be business partners for 30-some years. But I'd be shocked if anything went wrong now.

PLAYBOY: How happy were the seven years you starred on *Happy Days*, which debuted in 1974?

HOWARD: I did the pilot because I had a horrible draft lottery number and I was afraid there were no more deferments. I thought if I was on a television series the parent company or the network would try to protect me. The pilot didn't sell immediately, but Nixon did away with the draft, so I was okay. I had just started studying film at USC when *Happy Days* got picked up, and I had to drop out. The show became a smash, but I never really understood it, its tone or its success. I thought it was a good job for me, but you never think a show is going to go and go and go.

In the early 1980s I started to get jobs as a director, and of course I was thought of for comedies like *Night Shift*. I was so grateful for those years at the [*Happy Days* creator] Garry Marshall school of comedy, getting great lessons in how to do go-for-the-jokes, middle-of-the-road, number-one hit comedies.

PLAYBOY: How did you make the jump to directing?

HOWARD: It was all *Happy Days*. Roger Corman wouldn't have let me direct *Grand Theft Auto* if I wasn't on a number one show. I had already begun to feel I was hitting a ceiling as an actor. I wanted to be a director, not an actor-director. I hadn't done any writing or made any short films for about a year after I was married. Cheryl and I lived in a two-bedroom apartment in the Los Feliz neighborhood of Los Angeles. I bought a 16-millimeter Moviola and set it in the spare bedroom with the door open. I told Cheryl, "Every time I walk by that room I want to look at that Moviola and see that there's no film in it." That got me writing and making short films on the weekends again. Within a year I was directing *Grand Theft Auto*, which—as Roger Corman has theorized—was just young people on the run in a car and car-crash stuff inspired by *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.

*If you're in love
and committed
to each other,
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PLAYBOY: In 1980 you directed 10-time nominee and two-time Oscar winner Bette Davis in the TV movie *Skyward*. Five years later, you directed Don Ameche, another legend, in the sci-fi film *Cocoon*. Did they haze you?

HOWARD: When I'd talk about the glory days of Hollywood, Don—the Gentleman, as I called him—would put his hand on my shoulder and say, "Don't long for that." He told me how he would get incredible reviews for a movie and then, for the next three years, they'd put him in only romantic comedies and he couldn't do anything about it. It seemed to really eat him up. One of the thrills of my career was seeing Don win the Academy Award for *Cocoon*. With Bette Davis, I had seen all the films she'd made with her favorite director, William Wyler—*The Little Foxes*, *Jezebel*—and knew that Wyler wore suits and ties to the set. The first day of shooting it was 100 degrees on a tarmac in

Plano, Texas and I was wearing a suit and tie. I had to go over and show Bette Davis how to fake a scene in an airplane cockpit where she's pretending to be flying upside down. She sees me walking up to her and, loud enough for the whole crew to hear, says, "Oh my God, I saw this child walking up to me and wondered what could this child possibly have to say to me of any consequence? Ha-ha-ha!" She'd already told me she would call me Mr. Howard until she decided whether or not she liked me. Meanwhile, I'm popping Tums and tossing and turning.

PLAYBOY: Did she ever decide?

HOWARD: Toward the end of that first day, she had some trouble with a scene that had tricky dialogue and staging. I gave her a suggestion, and she said, "Oh no, I don't think so, but I'll try it. Ha-ha-ha!" She put out her unfiltered Camel, did the scene, and it flowed nicely. Fifteen minutes later, I went up and said, "Thank you for a great day, Miss Davis. I'll see you tomorrow." And she said, "Okay, Ron, see you tomorrow," and patted me on the ass. That didn't mean I was out of the woods, but when the shooting was over, she said, "I had my doubts about you, but you could be another Wyler." I've never lived up to that, but I've tried.

PLAYBOY: When you're doing a movie, do you still pop Tums and toss and turn?

HOWARD: Especially as I get older and have to get up to take a leak in the middle of the night. When I'm shooting, that three A.M. journey to the toilet is pretty much about it for me sleepwise. I get butterflies almost every day. There's a finite amount of time to achieve things. You never know when you'll have a chance to make a horrible oversight or capture something within those frame lines that people will want to use on their retrospective reels. I'm rabid about trying to carry my end of the bargain, because I'm going to expect a lot from people. I want to create an environment where there's an opportunity for them to feel as though they've excelled.

PLAYBOY: Because some of your earliest movies such as *Splash*, *Cocoon* and *Apollo 13* were financially and critically acclaimed, there's a perception that you're most attracted to making movies for the widest possible audience. But how easy was it getting those movies made?

HOWARD: [Laughs] They were anything but low-hanging fruit. *Splash* took me four years to get off the ground. So many actors turned down those roles. *Cocoon*, a movie featuring a cast of senior citizens—or as I used to call it, *Close Encounters on Golden Pond*—didn't seem like a particularly commercial idea to anyone. *Apollo 13* terrified me on a commercial level. You couldn't make a better movie about the space program than *The Right Stuff*, and no one had gone to see that. When Brian Grazer and I cast Tom Hanks, director friends asked, "Are you putting a comedy spin" (continued on page 131)

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LIFE & DEATH *on the* ROPES

THE DEATH OF A *LUCHADOR* IN THE RING SENDS MEXICAN WRESTLING TO THE MAT

BY THOMAS GOLIANOPOULOS

Marisela Peña, president of AAA Wrestling, has a tradition: She brings an urn, a vase made of gold and silver so ornate it practically glows, to every major AAA event. The urn contains the ashes of the company founder, her brother Antonio, who died in 2006.

Backstage at the Arena Ciudad de México, 20 minutes before the start of Triplemanía XXIII, the biggest *lucha libre* show of the year, here is Peña in a poufy baby-blue evening gown more appropriate for the Met Ball than a wrestling match, holding the urn and delivering a pep talk to her roster—her children, as she calls them. She stands next to Luz Ramírez, who also clutches a memorial—a modest carved mahogany box with a tiny gold crucifix secured near the lid. It contains the ashes of her son Pedro “Hijo del Perro” Aguayo Ramírez, one of tonight’s inductees into AAA’s Hall of Fame.

Illustration by Jason Holley



On the night of Friday, March 20, 2015, Aguayo wrestled in Tijuana in a four-person match that, when compared with the bloody brawls he was known for, appeared fairly sedate. "Everything was normal," says T.J. "Manik" Perkins, Aguayo's tag-team partner that evening. "Up until the moment we were both on the ropes, everything was totally normal." About five minutes in, Aguayo charged one of his opponents, Óscar "Rey Mysterio" Gutiérrez Rubio, in the corner, where Mysterio delivered Aguayo a double boot to the face. Aguayo then rolled forward and took a flying head scissors to the outside, resulting in an awkward bump on the ring apron. When Aguayo reentered the ring, Mysterio drop-kicked him in the shoulder. He crumpled into the middle rope, the perfect position for Mysterio's signature move, the 619. Manik fell next to Aguayo. Both were supposed to duck when Mysterio swooped in, but Manik, sensing something was wrong, whispered, "Perro, Perro, down!" As Mysterio flew over him, Aguayo lay still, then slumped to the bottom rope and, finally, to the canvas. He died at a nearby hospital. The cause of death was cardiac arrest, likely the result of a cervical stroke that occurred when his neck was broken. He was 35.

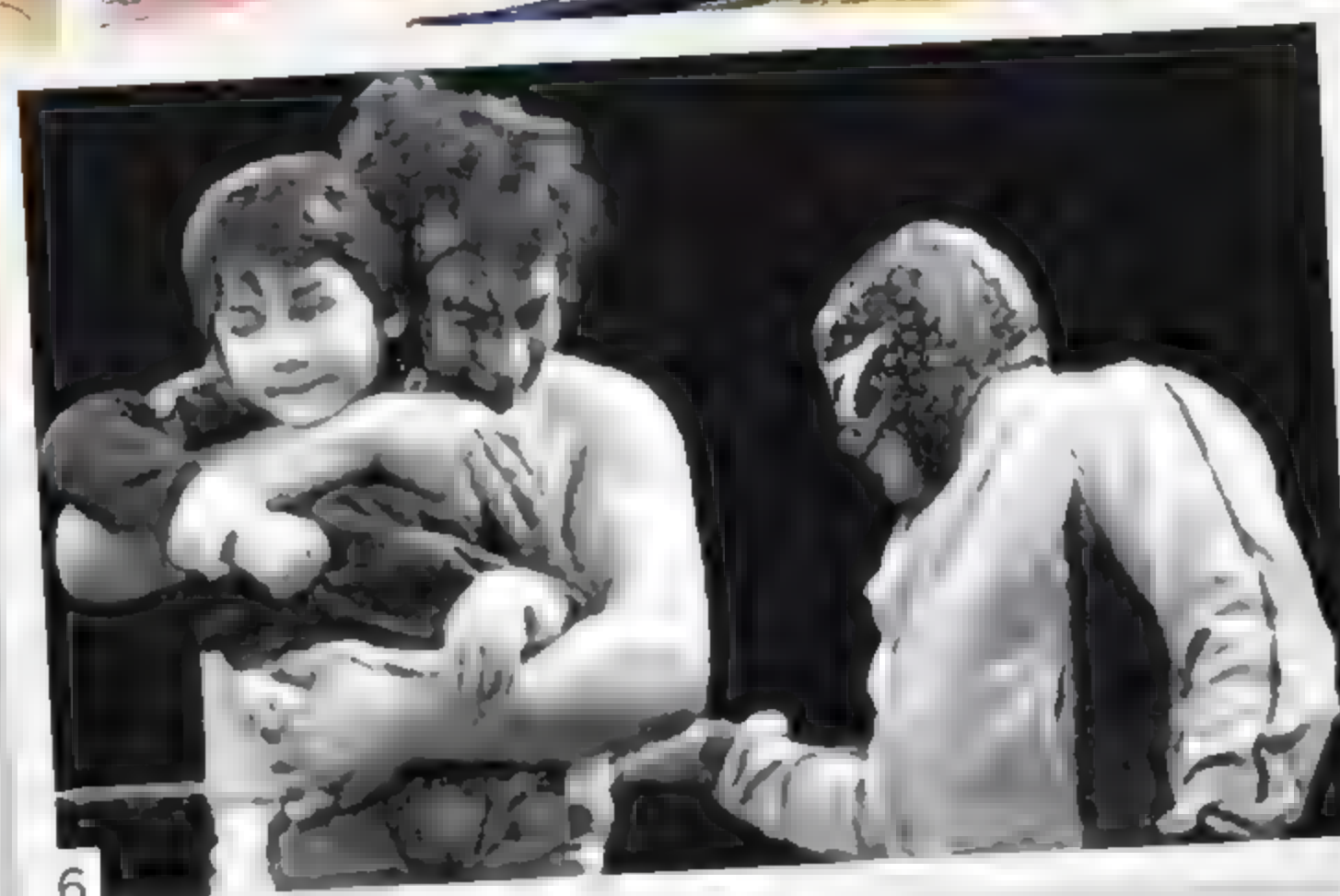
Peña's speech outside the locker room is brief, a few words on the company's success and the tragic circumstances of this evening. It ends with another AAA tradition: a cheer for the departed.

"Perro! Perro! Long live Perro! Rah, rah, rah!"

When Peña talks about Aguayo, the son of a legend who became a legend himself following a decade-long stretch as the most popular *rudo* (heel, or bad guy) in Mexico, she still aches. "I feel a pain in my heart," she says. "The people of Mexico feel a pain in their heart." The mourning spread across borders. "I was just in Colombia and there were fans with tears in their eyes, holding pictures of him," Aguayo's on-screen girlfriend



1. Hijo del Perro Aguayo (right) faces Rey Mysterio in his final match. 2. Aguayo slumps on the ropes before the match is stopped. 3. Aguayo's mother with the press. 4. Rey Mysterio. 5. Aguayo with his father, wrestling legend Perro Aguayo Sr. 6. Father and son in the ring.



Taya Valkyrie says through her own tears. "After he died, I swear I saw him in the dressing room. It still feels like a presence is missing."

Aguayo's death has been called a freak accident. It is also a tragedy with more than one victim.

A few minutes before Peña's address, Konnan, director of AAA's Creative Department, lumbers between dressing rooms, providing last-minute instructions to the *luchadores*. A 51-year-old Cuban born Carlos Ashenoff, Konnan was the biggest star in Mexican wrestling in the early 1990s. He now walks with a slight limp after hip-replacement surgery; he's also had a kidney transplant. His concern at the moment is the hair vs. hair match between Alberto El Patrón and Brian Cage, an American with Wolverine sideburns and an "evil foreigner" gimmick—he wears a VOTE FOR TRUMP: MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN T-shirt.

Konnan listens as Cage runs through the outlined finish. "Super kick, one, two, that's the slow count, DDT, slow count, we head to the top rope, I catch him, power bomb off the ropes, false finish, low blow, he takes me into the chair that's set up in the corner the whole time, then arm bar."

"Just so you know, I talked to Alberto.

Bring the physicality up," Konnan directs. "I need it to be pure and crisp." Before exiting, he remembers a big stunt planned for the match. "Listen, there's something you need to know about the particleboard. The best way to break it is to fucking flip into it. If you go into it shoulder first, it will just break in half. If you flip, it will blow up, and the fucking crowd will blow up. I watched the match between Perro and Myzteziz, and when Myzteziz threw Perro into the particleboard, Perro did a full flip and the fucking thing exploded."

Konnan thinks of Aguayo often—and not just because he was ringside in Tijuana. He remembers meeting—and threatening—Aguayo when the boy was 11 years old. At the time, Konnan was battling on-screen with Pedro "El Perro" Aguayo Sr., possibly the most popular nonmasked wrestler in Mexico's history. It was the hottest feud in the country, and during an appearance on *Y Usted...¿Qué Opina?*, a long-running talk show, Konnan told Aguayo Sr., "I hope your son gets in the wrestling business, because once I'm done whupping your ass, I'm going to whup his ass." Later, in the dressing room, Perrito, as the younger Aguayo was nicknamed, refused to shake Konnan's hand. He was terrified. His father, an old-school type, (continued on page 138)



"It was a fantastic night, Babs! First he took me to a charming little restaurant no one's ever heard of and then he showed me an erogenous zone I never knew existed."

Who will be crowned Playmate of the Year?

There's a fair chance that Americans will elect their first female president this year. We've always admired empowered women, especially one who can make it all the way to the White House, but we're more likely to fall for a lady who stops by the Mansion instead. Last year we did just that, with 12 mesmerizing Playmates whose magnetic personalities match their uninhibited sexual charisma. Now Hef needs your help selecting the standout knockout. Make your pick online at playboy.com/pmoy2016, and remember, every vote counts.



*PLAYMATE
+
REVIEW*

Miss February
KAYSLEE COLLINS





This page:
Miss September
MONICA SIMS

Opposite page:
Top
Miss October
ANA CHERI

Bottom left
Miss August
JENNIFER JANE

Bottom right
Miss June
KATIE HARRIS







This page

Miss November
RACHEL HARRIS

Opposite page

Top

Miss April
ALEXANDRA TYLER

Bottom

Miss December
LUCENA WASHINGTON



This page:
Miss March
CHELSIE ARYN

Opposite page:
Top
Miss January
BRITTNY WARD

Bottom left
Miss July
KAYLA RAE REID

Bottom right
Miss June
KAYLIA CASSANDRA



In the Court of

KING GEORGE

THE SECRET WORLD OF CASINOS



WORDS & PICTURES
by BEN SCHOTT

DEALERS

FROM the top down, the hierarchy of the traditional casino gaming floor is:

CEO

VICE PRESIDENT

CHIEF GAMING OFFICER

(oversees table games and slot machines)

CASINO MANAGER

(the **DIRECTOR OF TABLE GAMES**)

SHIFT MANAGER

PIT MANAGER

(manages a number of **PITS**, each of which includes a number of **SECTIONS**)

FLOOR SUPERVISOR

(manages a section, which varies by the complexity of the games included: e.g., four blackjack tables, one craps table or two roulette wheels and one blackjack table)

DEALER

Dealers work in a four-person **STRING** (cards and roulette) or **CREW** (craps)—with three of them dealing at any one time and one **RELIEF** rotating between them every 20 minutes.

A new dealer signals he's ready to take over by **TAPPING OUT** his colleague on the left shoulder (a.k.a. **PUSHING IN**). This allows the active dealer to complete all the remaining transactions before **CLAPPING OUT**—showing players and security his empty hands. The outgoing dealer then introduces his replacement and may pass on intelligence about the state of tipping, either with an aside ("Look out for **GEORGE**—sorry, Bill—at **FIRST BASE**") or, less subtly, by spreading the cards not into an arc but an S-shape, for **STIFF**.

Dealers use a range of signals to alert colleagues that **HEAT** or **BRASS** (management) is **ON THE FLOOR**—for example, tapping the craps stick on the edge of the table.



Dealers instinctively assess players, sometimes based on how they're dressed, but more often on how they play. A dealer will instantly **CLOCK** those exhibiting **GAME KNOWLEDGE** or **STRATEGIC PLAY**. Dealers can spot off-duty dealers by certain **TELLS**, such as encouraging other players to tip, riffling or drop-cutting chips and, in poker, pitching cards into the muck when they fold.

Dealers are instructed to **TALK THE GAME**, which means verbalizing actions for the benefit of players and supervisors, as well as for their own concentration. A call of **CASH CHANGE**, for example, alerts the pit bosses that money is being exchanged for checks, and **COLOR UP** or **COLOR DOWN** indicates that checks are being exchanged for larger or smaller denominations.



BREAK-IN HOUSES • Casinos that hire and train inexperienced (**BREAKER**) dealers—often straight from dealer school.

HUSTLING THE TOKE/STRONG-ARMING • Attempting to persuade players to tip. **SOFT HUSTLES** include paying a winner in low-denomination chips to encourage tipping. A **HARD HUSTLE** is when a dealer says something like "Hey, that check would look great as a dealer bet!" Toke hustling is prohibited by management and frowned on by most dealers (who pool their tips) as unprofessional and counterproductive.

DEAD GAME/DEAD SPREAD • An open table with no players. Dealers are instructed to stand at dead tables, the cards arced in front of them, with their hands at either side and a welcoming look on their face. Those looking for a quiet shift avoid making eye contact with passing customers to discourage action.

CROSSFIRE • When dealers chat with their colleagues at nearby tables. Prohibited by management.

PLAYERS

GEORGE • The most admired player in any casino: a good tipper. Also **KING GEORGE**, **TRIPLE GEORGE** and **JORGE**.

TOM/STIFF • A "tight old man" (*T-O-M*), a reluctant tipper or non-tipper, a player who brings his own food and drink to avoid **TOKING** the waitresses. **TOMS TOKE** the dealer a **WHITE** and say **CHOP** to get 50 cents back.

STEAMER • A (reckless) player for whom speed is the motivation, win or lose.

FISH • A fool. In craps, a **RAIL-HOGGER**; in poker, one taken for a ride by other players.

TAKING THE HOOK • When a player **CHASES** wins or losses; the player can be **REELED IN** by an experienced dealer.

ROCKS • Poker players who bet only when they have **THE NUTS** (a strong hand).

FACCE • A player whose face deserves a slap.

ON TILT • Describes a poker player who is playing well below his ability, usually by being excessively reckless; when a player has his **NOSE OPEN**.

DONK • An unskilled player.

ACORN • A newbie; one who can be taught and molded by a dealer.

GRINDER • One who plays at the same table hour after hour, rarely changing betting patterns and usually not toking. A **GRIND JOINT** is a casino with low-limit games.

CARDS & SHUFFLES

MOST CASINO dealers are fluent in the core card games such as blackjack (**SNAPPER**, **21**, **B.J.**) and baccarat (**BAC**), as well as a number of **SPIN-OFF**, **NOVELTY** or **CARNIVAL** games (including Big Six, Let It Ride and Three-Card Poker). The rules of each game differ, but the basic techniques of shuffling, dealing and check-handling remain consistent. Shuffles vary by casino and game—the challenge for the house is to ensure adequate “game protection” while maximizing the number of hands dealt per hour. ♣ A (somewhat elaborate) shuffle might be:

WASH  RIFFLE  RIFFLE  STRIP  RIFFLE  BOX  CUT  BURN

WASHING/SCRAMBLING Randomly mixing cards facedown on the felt.
RIFFLING Dividing a deck in two and interleaving the halves.
STRIP A series of cuts (usually three to seven) stacked one on top of another.
BOXING ... Placing the bottom third of a deck on the top, sometimes with a 180-degree rotation.
BURNING Discarding the top card.
PITCHING Dealing cards from the hand rather than a **SHOE** (dealing box).
SHORT PITCH A card that doesn't make it across the felt to the player.
HELICOPTERING Pitching the cards high above the table, risking exposure.
EXPOSED/FLASHED CARD A card whose value has been accidentally displayed.
BOXED CARD A card faceup in the deck.
STUB Whatever the dealer is holding after the first card has been dealt.
LAYING BRICKS The brutally repetitive nature of dealing blackjack.

WAITRESSES

COCKTAIL waitresses are a key part of a casino's ecosystem; they work hard at charming guests and sustaining the flow of **COMPED** alcohol.

At the start of each shift, waitresses swap intelligence on players (“There’s a George on table two”) before setting out on their **ROUNDS**. Once collected, orders are filled at backstage **SERVICE BARS**. Here waitresses prepare their own glasses, ice and garnishes for the barmen and **CALL** the drinks in a set order, usually beers first, followed by mixed drinks and shots (in order: vodkas, gins, whiskeys), and then wine, soda and juices. ♣ Most standard orders are dispensed via **GUNS** (pictured at right), which have key codes for different drinks and brands of liquor. House liquor is served unless a premium brand is requested.

Because waitresses keep their own tips (unlike most dealers), getting the best **SHIFTS** and **SECTIONS** is crucial: Working **GRAVEYARD** in **PENNY SLOTS** can be financially disastrous, whereas the **CRAPS PIT** on Super Bowl weekend is highly rewarding. Shifts and sections are allocated by seniority based on longevity; at the top of the ladder are **DAY ONE** waitresses, who joined when a casino opened. (This explains waitresses’ preference for new establishments.)

Slots players usually tip cash or vouchers; table players usually tip checks. Some waitresses linger at a table to develop a rapport with players; others are all business, figuring they’re just dropping off a drink. But if



you don't think waitresses are comparing the color of your stacks with what you tip, you're crazy. King Georges are sometimes referred to by the value of their toke (“Mr. Black on table three”). Dealers will often encourage stiffies not to forget their waitresses. ♣ If a shift has been profitable, waitresses say they **MADE BANK**; if especially good, they **MADE YELLOW** (i.e., \$1,000), or even “Get the milk ready! I got a **CHOCOLATE CHIP**” (\$5,000).

Given the stereotypes of casino waitresses (and the uniforms they're given to wear), many consider gentle flirtation to be part of the job. But dealers, supervisors and security are all alert for any banter that turns abusive. Some single waitresses wear engagement or wedding rings to keep pests at bay; some married waitresses work ringless to inspire hope.

SUPERSTITION

Players

ALONG WITH lucky clothes, charms, seats, tables, machines and dealers, players often have a host of superstitions. Some buy in for odd amounts or for sums featuring eights (such as \$8,880); others think \$50 bills are unlucky. ♣ In craps, saying “seven” is considered unlucky and ill-mannered, as is applauding your own roll. Some believe a new stickman will prompt a seven; a left-handed female shooter is considered lucky; cocktail waitresses are thought to cool the action; and changing the dice after a winning run supposedly brings bad luck. **VIRGIN** shooters are lucky if female, unlucky if male. ♣ Blackjack players believe a strong **ANCHOR** (the last player) prevents the dealer's “destined” card from going awry. Others place two bets instead of one to change their luck. ♣ Slots players tap the screen or the side of the machine for luck, or they crank the arm rather than push the button to spin the reels. Some believe cash bets win more than voucher bets or that machines are programmed to favor new players. Cell phone signals are said to influence a win positively—or negatively, depending on whom you ask. And opinions differ as to whether a casino loyalty card increases or decreases your odds. ♣ Card players shout **MONKEY** (possibly a corruption of “monarchy”) in a bid to encourage **PAINT** (face cards) or tens.

The House

IT IS CURIOUS how irrational even experienced dealers and floor men can be, though inexplicable runs of luck may signal a flaw in security. ♣ Supervisors have been known to perform a range of rituals to **COOL** the action: shaking salt behind players or under tables, turning the drop-box paddle around in its slot, standing on one leg, swapping out winning dice or cards—sometimes for replacements that have literally been chilled in a fridge. One shift manager places a folded surveillance photograph of a “lucky” player inside his shoe before walking the floor. ♣ Craps is a hotbed of superstition. Pit bosses have been known to place seven ashtrays around a table, to spray paint the number seven on the table when changing the cloth and even to have “hot” tables moved an inch or so. Unscrupulous dealers might throw coins under the table to bring bad luck or find any excuse to touch the dice or brush against a shooter. ♣ Anxious floor men who **SWEAT THE MONEY** are known as **BLEEDERS**.

Finally, many on both sides of the table are convinced it's unlucky to be superstitious.

CASH, CHECKS & CHIPS

ALTHOUGH many use **CHECK** and **CHIP** interchangeably, there is a difference. Checks have a value and are color-coded:

\$	Color	Nickname
1	WHITE	<i>bird dropping</i>
2	YELLOW	-
2.50	PINK	-
5	RED	<i>nickel</i>
25	GREEN	<i>quarter</i>
100	BLACK	<i>buck</i>
500	PURPLE	-
1K	YELLOW/ORANGE	<i>banana, pumpkin</i>
5K	BROWN/GRAY	<i>chocolate</i>

(These are common check colors, but they vary by casino.)

Chips—commonly used in roulette—have no set value until a player **BUYS IN** and denominates them according to his bankroll. Some players request colors they consider lucky.

When players buy in, they place their bills on the felt, and the dealer sorts them by denomination before **BREAKING THEM DOWN** in an overlapping pattern visible to the **EYE**. The largest-denomination bills are placed nearest the wheel (roulette) or the shoe (cards) for security. Then the number of chips or checks is manually **PROVED** to the player (and to the cameras), before being **PUSHED (SENT/PASSED)** across the table with the dealer's outside hand (in roulette, the hand farthest from the wheel). Standard **TWENTY STACKS** are usually pushed using the formations illustrated below.

With table games, the house's checks are stored in the **RACK (BANK/TRAY/WELL)** in front of the dealer and are arranged by color in the various **TUBES**. (Larger denominations are stored on the inside of the rack for protection.) Dealers use various techniques to remove checks from the rack, including:

PLUCKING/PICKING • Taking chips one at a time, at high speed.

SHORT STACK • Any stack under 200 but still in a house-approved format.

DIRTY STACK/BARBER'S POLE • A stack of different-value checks.

CUTTING • Separating chips from a stack or dividing a stack into smaller units.

SPLASHING/SPREADING • Sliding (**WIPING**) a stack of checks (usually four or five) into a line along the layout to demonstrate (**PROVE**) the number.

DROP CUT • To skillfully release a number of checks from the bottom of a stack by feel.

COLOR FOR COLOR • Paying a winning bet by matching the checks a player staked.

CONVERTING • Paying a winner with a larger value check and taking change.

DIRTY MONEY • Checks collected from a losing bet. Some think it bad luck (or bad manners) to pay winners with dirty money—and many casinos think it's bad game security.

COLOR UP • To exchange a number of low-denomination chips for fewer chips of higher value. The opposite is **CHECK CHANGE**.

MUCKING/CHIPPING UP • Gathering chips from the layout into your palm—a test of skill and speed examined when **AUDITIONING** for a job as dealer. Mucking can be assisted by a colleague (**MUCKER**) or a **CHIPPING MACHINE**.

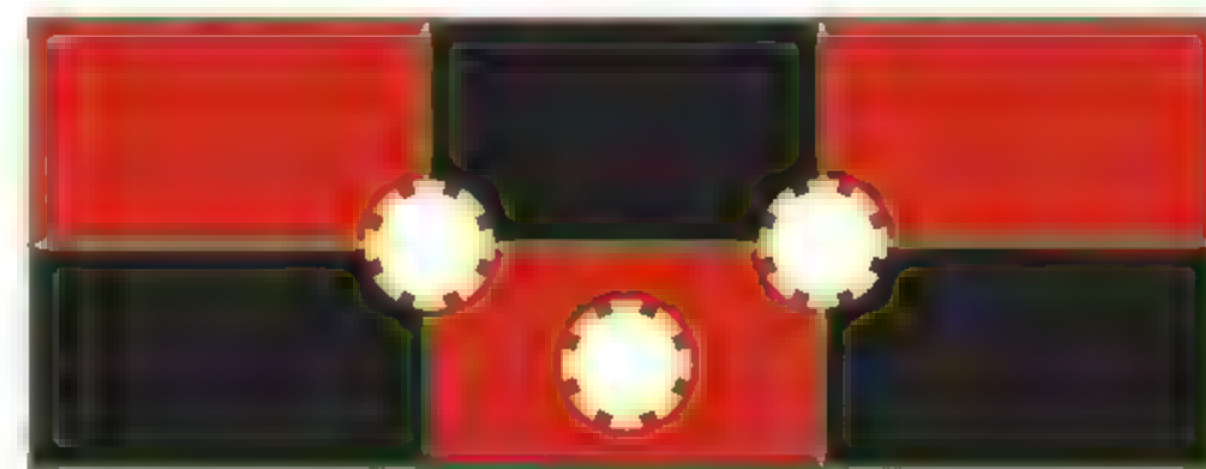
TIGHTENING THE POT • Rearranging a large pile of chips (in poker) for neatness or game security, or so they can be pushed easily.

HAND TO HAND • Passing chips, cash or anything else by hand without placing it on the layout first—a breach of game protection.

TAPPING TOKES • When the dealer knocks a check he's been tipped against a hard surface before dropping it into the **TOKE BOX**. Tapping notifies the supervisor and security, and soft hustles other players to **ZUKE** (tip).

ROULETTE

ROULETTE dealers **PICK AND FLICK** the **PILL** (ball) in various ways, including **SNAPPING** it between their fingers or **WHIPPING** it around the wheel. Casinos require dealers to vary the position and strength of their spins to prevent players from **CLOCKING** or **TRACKING** patterns. The ball must make at least three revolutions; many players won't bet until it is in motion, so dealers often **SLING** the pill with vigor to allow extra time for chips to be placed. That said, more spins mean more profit, and dealers are under pressure to keep the game moving. Winning numbers are marked with a **DOLLY**. ♣ Some dealers memorize **PICTURE BETS** to help them calculate odds. For example, the bet below (two corners, one straight up) is known as the **MICKY MOUSE**—it pays 51 to one.

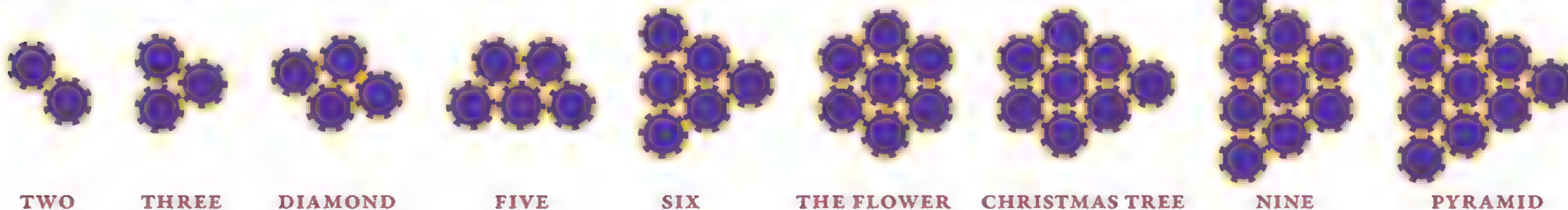


CRAPS

THE four-man craps crew comprises a **STICKMAN**, two **BASEMEN** (who place and supervise bets) and a rotating **RELIEF**. They are supervised by a **BOX MAN**, who sits opposite the stickman, in front of the chip rack. The stickman checks the dice after each throw, returns the dice to the shooter with the **STICK (MOP/WHIP/POLE)**, hustles up action, places and encourages high-risk proposition bets in the center of the layout (**SELLING PROPS**) and **CALLS** the rolls. ♣ Rolls are called aloud to announce the total and how it was made (**EASY** or **HARD**), and to help dealers **PAY OUT** correctly. Calls are designed to avoid mishearing, for example, "Five, five, no-field five" ensures a roll is not confused with "Center field nine." "Yo" or "Yo-leven" is called when the total is 11, to avoid being mistaken for the dreaded seven. Many stickmen take pride in quirky or risqué calls, such as "Ten, hard ten...girl's best friend!"

COMMON STACK-PUSHING FORMATIONS

→ PUSHED TOWARD PLAYER



CHEATING & ADVANTAGE PLAY

THE EYE IN THE SKY (surveillance) hunts for criminals, **CHEATS** and **ADVANTAGE PLAYERS**. Cheating (breaking laws or casino rules) is illegal; advantage play (exploiting weak casino procedures or equipment) is not, though houses will ask advantage players to cease or leave.

BASIC STRATEGY/THE BOOK • The “correct” way to play. Cheats are often caught by playing irrationally—sticking on a weak hand, taking insurance inappropriately.

TAKING SHOTS • Attempting to cheat.

SMOKE • Deliberate bad play intended to avert suspicion; a form of **CAMOUFLAGE**.

PINCHING • Removing chips from a bet.

CAPPING/PRESSING • Adding chips to a bet.

PAST POSTING • Adding chips to a roulette or craps layout after a number has won.

(HAND) MUCKING/SWITCHING/CARD PALMING • Techniques to swap cards on the table or introduce winning cards.

GAFF • Any equipment used to cheat. Dice can be **GAFFED** in many ways:

MISSPOTTED/TOPS & BOTTOMS/TEES •

Dice misnumbered in various configurations to avoid or ensure certain rolls.

LOADED • Weighted dice.

FLATS • Misshapen dice.

SHOEBOXES • Grossly misshapen dice, easy to spot with the naked eye.

GLIM/SHINER • A reflective device.

COLD/STACKED DECK • A deck or shoe prearranged by a cheat, a.k.a. **COOLER**.

PAPER • Marked cards, usually aces and tens. A range of methods allow a deck to be **READ**:

CRIMPING • Folding or bending a card.

(THUMB) NAILING/DIMPLING • Indenting a card, sometimes using a check that is then toked to the dealer as a distraction.

DAUBING • Applying foreign substances (a.k.a. **SHADE**) to the backs of cards.

PINNING/PUNCHING • Making small holes or indentations in cards.

EDGE WORK • Shaving or nicking the edge of a card.

BORDER WORK • Marking the printed borders of cards.

SANDING • Filing the back of a card, say with a speck of sandpaper stuck to a finger.

SLUG • A block of high-value cards (tens and aces) introduced into a game, either deliberately or through a weak shuffle.

CARD COUNTING • The most well-known advantage play, in which players tally the cards dealt and bet big at key moments.

BACK COUNTING • When card counters play only advantageous hands, a.k.a. **WONGING**, after blackjack ace Stanford Wong.

RAT-HOLING • When advantage players sneak their own checks off the table to conceal the amount they’re winning.

EDGE PLAY/PLAYING THE SORTS/PLAYING THE TURN • Exploiting printing errors to identify cards by patterns on the reverse.

CONTROL ROLLING/RHYTHM ROLLING/SLIDING • Trying to influence a craps roll by setting and shooting the dice in a specific way.

SUB • Anything used by a dealer to conceal stolen checks—from a thick watchband to shoes with specially created cavities.

DUMPING • When a dealer deliberately pays losers, overpays winners or misplays a hand.

HOP CUT • A false cut in which the cards are returned to their original order.

FLUTTER CUT/BUTTERFLY CUT/STUTTER CUT • Riffing the cards during the cut to expose their values.

STEP • When a dealer misaligns the deck to indicate where a cheat should make the cut.

MECHANIC • A dealer who manipulates cards to cheat—for example by **BUBBLING** (squeezing) a deck to **PEEK** at the top card(s) and then **DEUCE DEALING** the second card.

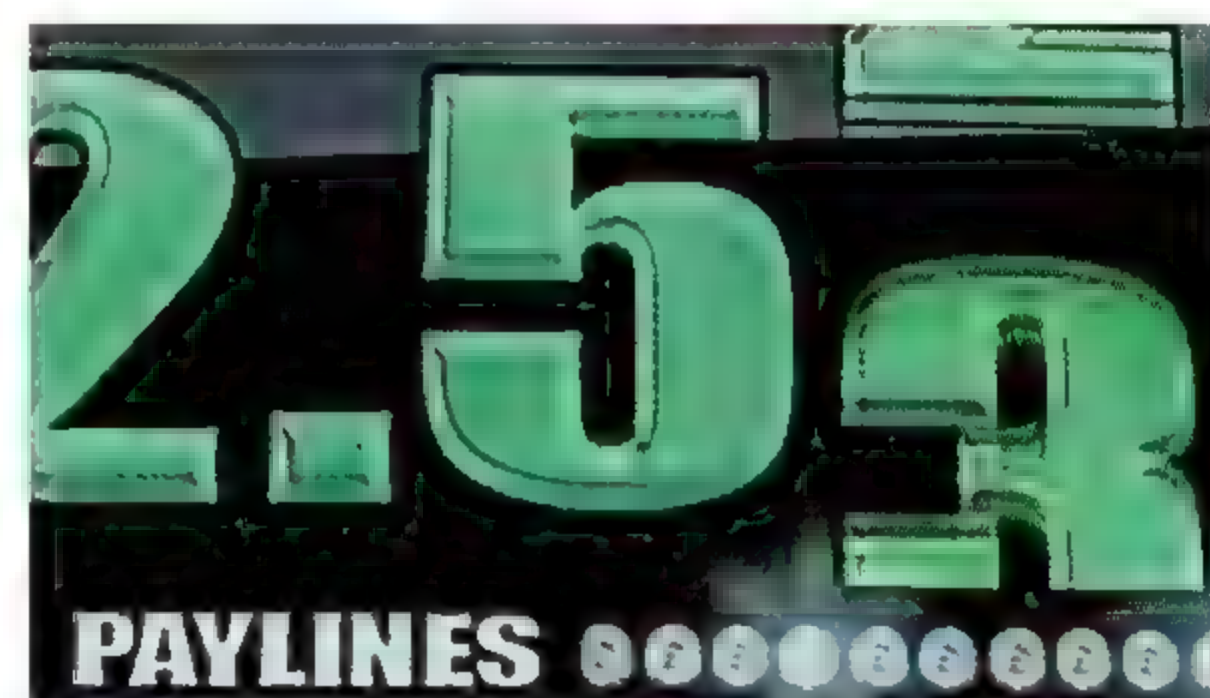
FRONT LOADING • When a sloppy or weak dealer **FLASHES** his hole card.

FIRST BASING/THIRD BASING • **READING** the dealer’s hole card from the first or last seat. **SPOOKING** is when a spectator communicates the dealer’s hole card to a player.

BACKING OFF/THE TAP • Stopping an advantage player from playing. Some casinos **FLAT BET** card counters, permitting them to wager a fixed sum for the duration of a shoe.

TRESPASSING • When a casino instructs an individual to leave. Known sometimes as **NRS 207.200**—Nevada’s trespass statute.

SLOTS



ALTHOUGH less glamorous than table games, slots contribute a significant proportion of gaming revenue: 46 percent for casinos on the Strip, 63 percent across Nevada, in 2014. Indeed, slots are a star attraction at some casinos—not least the El Cortez in Las Vegas; it has 237 traditional coin-operated machines and one of the last remaining “hard count” rooms to handle all the change. ♠ Players develop affection for specific machines (“You can move ’em, but they will find ’em”), which can make decommissioning games problematic.

VOLATILITY • The risk-reward ratio of a game. High-volatility slots make infrequent payouts of larger sums; low-volatility slots, the opposite.

TASTE • Small wins that are designed to keep players at the machine, a.k.a. **INTERMITTENT REWARDS**.

ATTRACT MODE • The sequence of sounds and lights designed to beguile passing players.

APPOINTMENT GAMES • Games that draw players into a casino, such as *Buffalo Slots*.

HOLD • The percentage of bets kept by the house. Holds can be **LOOSE** (marginally more favorable to the player) or **TIGHT** (favoring the house).

BONUS VULTURES/FLEAS • Ne’er-do-wells who intimidate (older) players into abandoning a game just before it is due to pay a bonus. Casinos are conscious of the **FLEA FACTOR** when purchasing new games.

Coin slots are susceptible to a range of cheating techniques, including the **MONKEY PAW** (a metal hook designed to fake a coin) and **SHAVED TOKENS** or **SLUGS** that register a credit but fall through the machine. Experienced slot workers instantly recognize the *clang* of a slug as it falls through a machine.

Thanks to the staff of the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, Todd Greenberg, Michael Shackelford, Bill Zender, Marc Shumsker, Eric Jacobs, John Robison, Kenny Epstein and the staff of the El Cortez.



"Wait a moment, Wallace. I want to think a few happy thoughts before doing an unpleasant act."

CROW COUNTRY MOSES

ACROSS THE DUSTY
MONTANA PLAINS, A LONELY
FATHER AND SON SEARCH
FOR CONNECTION

*Fiction by
Callan Wink*

Illustration by Matt Dorfman

I was lost.

Well, more accurately, my father was lost and I was with my father. Does that make me lost by default? I suppose so. Some would say that it is an inherited trait, being lost, like having blue eyes, alcoholism or a tendency to see the glass half empty.

In Crow country, there are horses everywhere. Mostly wild patchwork paints with mismatched eyes that give them a crazed feral look. There are horses and the land is always on fire. Not all of it, of course, but some of it always, at least every time I have ever been there. In the early spring, after the snowmelt but before green-up, men walk the fields with flame-throwing devices, the fuel canisters strapped to their backs, the flames shooting from long metal tubes. They walk the tangled field edges, the creek bottoms, the orange and blue flames stabbing out like tongues bitten ragged, tasting the air. The alders and hunched Russian olives and tangled brown grasses smoldering black and bursting into flame as pheasants cluck and run senselessly across the bare fields. An apocalyptic scene set against a backdrop of arthritic, leafless cottonwoods and the flat hills that hide the Bighorn River.

We were lost in eastern Montana, Crow country, looking for the Little Bighorn Battlefield, site of Custer's glorious defeat—my father behind the wheel, piloting our silver compact rental car over red clay roads greasy from the runoff of melted snow. Smoke rose from the charred fields in gauzy patches, filling the car with the faintly narcotic smell of smoldering weeds. Our luggage was in the backseat. *(continued on page 126)*

1649

1648

1647

32'30"

1646

1645







Running Wild

Get lost on a nature walk with Miss January, who's always ready for an outdoor adventure

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SASHA EISENMAN

Miss January Amberleigh West has spent most of her life in the Pacific Northwest, a lush landscape carved by rivers and punctuated by majestic mountains, so it's no surprise she enjoys the great outdoors more than the pulsing confines of a club. "Being outside comes so naturally to me—excuse the pun," she says. "I bike, kayak and wakeboard. When my friends and I go camping, I'm the one who starts the fire. I don't own jewelry, and I don't need glamour, which is why my pictorial is so awesome. It feels like a dream." Amberleigh is ambivalent toward the club scene, materialistic froufrou and frivolous hedonism, preferring instead to nourish her gray matter. The former paralegal is meticulous when it comes to grammar and quotes Ayn Rand often. (She fell in love with Rand's objectivist philosophy in high school, she says.) Still, a life

in front of the lens instead of behind a desk has always been the goal. "I've wanted to act since I was little, when I used my mom's camera to film skits with my friends," she says. "That being said, for a long time I didn't think I could model, let alone be a Playmate, because I was never the pretty, popular girl guys asked to the dance. I finally learned to stop caring about what others thought. Flash forward to me getting an e-mail from a PLAYBOY scout. I said 'Hell yeah!' and was in L.A. the next day." Amberleigh's favorite actress is Emma Watson, to whom she bears an uncanny resemblance, and she hopes to parlay her Playmatehood into similar top billings. In fact, she has already shot an upcoming indie film alongside Miss September 2015 Monica Sims and PMOY 2015 Dani Mathers. "I'm serious about everything I do in life, and I'm honored to be a part of PLAYBOY."

PLAYBOY.COM/AMBERLEIGH-WEST













MISS JANUARY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Amberley A West

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Amberleigh West

BUST: 32D WAIST: 23" HIPS: 32"

HEIGHT: 5'6" WEIGHT: 110 lbs.

BIRTH DATE: 9/4/91 BIRTHPLACE: Sedro-Woolley, Washington

AMBITIONS: To inspire others to chase their dreams.
Take time to do what makes YOU happy!

TURN-ONS: A man who is loyal, thoughtful, mature,
healthy and humble. I love a true gentleman.

TURNOFFS: Guys who don't respect women, have bad
manners or try to impress me with material things.

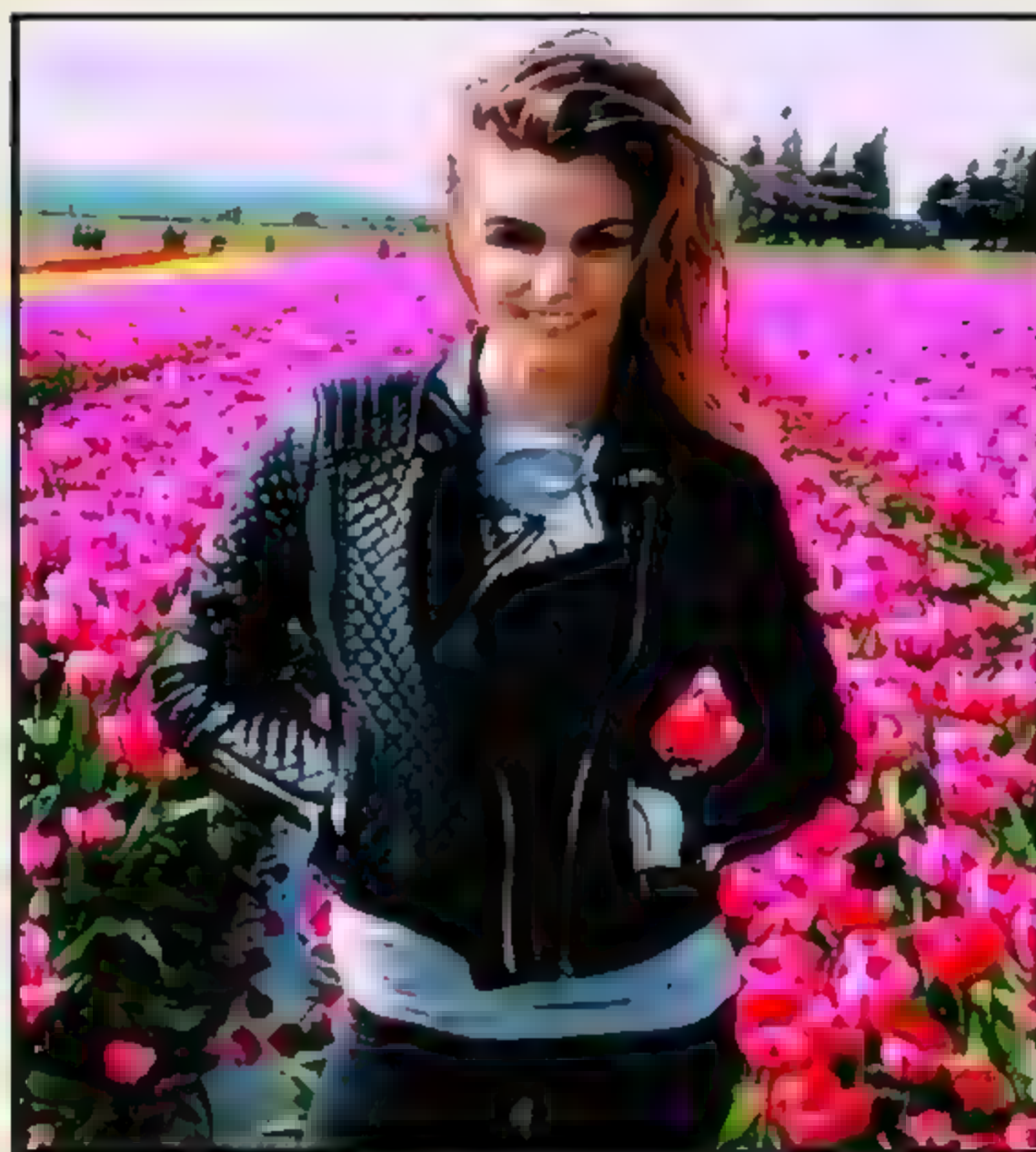
LADY JUSTICE: I am very passionate and enthusiastic
about the law. I enjoy legal research and writing.

MY WEAK SPOT: Food! It's always on my mind. I love
cooking or going out, as long as it's healthy!

MY PASSIONS: Hiking, biking, wakeboarding, swimming,
kayaking, horseback riding, camping—I love
the outdoors. The best part about Washington
is that there are so many outdoor activities!



Hiking through
the mud!



Tulip
Town!!



A dream
come true!



PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Religion is like a penis. It's a perfectly fine thing to have and take pride in, but when you take it out and wave it in our faces it becomes a problem.

Monica Lewinsky released a statement on Hillary Clinton's run for president: "I will not vote for Hillary," she said. "The last Clinton president left a bad taste in my mouth."

A man saw his ex-girlfriend at the mall. "I thought of you the other night while I was having sex," he told her.

"You must really miss me," she said.

"No," he answered. "It just keeps me from coming too quickly."



Why do 80 percent of women have bigger left breasts?

Because 80 percent of men are right-handed.

What's worse than waking up at a party and finding a penis drawn on your face?

Finding out it was traced.

I think we should go dutch," a woman said to her date. "You pay for dinner and a movie and the rest of the night will be on me."

The only time presidential candidates tell the truth during debates is when they call each other liars.

What should you do when your girlfriend tells you she fakes orgasms?

Pretend you don't hear her.

Arguing with a woman is like reading an app license agreement. In the end you ignore everything and click "I agree."

A recent study found that 48 percent of women have used vibrators.

The other 52 percent have new ones.

Sex is a lot like pot: The quality depends on the pusher.

How does a man demonstrate he knows how to plan for the future?

He buys two cases of beer instead of one.

Things we hated as kids: naps and spankings.
Things we love as adults: naps and spankings.

A man and a woman were in bed together when they both heard a key turn in the apartment door.

"Jesus, it's my husband," the woman said. "Quick, jump out the window."

"Are you crazy?" the man said. "We're on the 13th floor."

"This is no time to be superstitious," she said.

It turns out being an adult these days is mostly just googling how to do stuff.

One day while a mother was cleaning her son's room she found his iPad open to a bondage website. "What do you think we should do?" she asked her husband.

"Well," he replied, "I don't think we should spank him."

Isn't it scary to think that every bridge you drive across was constructed by the lowest bidder?

Our Unabashed Dictionary defines *magnet* as a woman who is attractive from the back but repulsive once you see her front.



Kelly Neiman

How is college like unprotected sex?

It's really fun until you get tested.

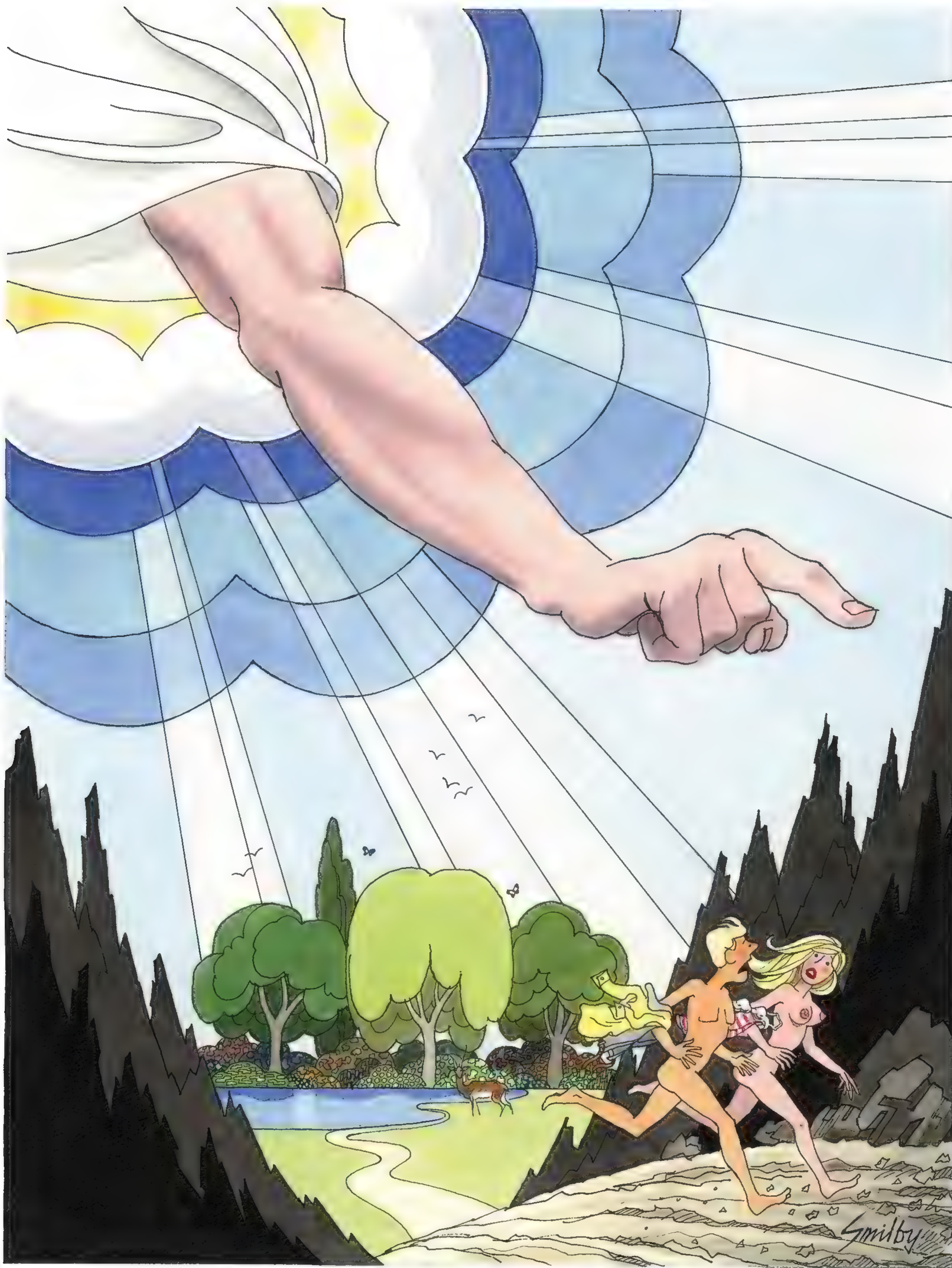
After an expensive Christmas, a father decided it was time to tell his eight-year-old son about Santa. "I think you're old enough to know that Santa isn't real," the father said. "To be honest, he was made up so kids would behave."

The boy looked his father in the eyes and said, "Like how God was made up to make adults behave?"

Monopoly is an outdated game because it has a luxury tax and rich people go to jail.

How do you get rid of unwanted pubic hair?
Spit it out.

Send your jokes to Playboy Party Jokes, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com.



"So much for sex education."



DUPLOSS BROTHERS

MARK AND JAY, THE SIBLINGS WHO ARE EVERYWHERE (TRANSPARENT, TOGETHERNESS, THE LEAGUE) AND DO EVERYTHING (ACT, WRITE, DIRECT), DISCUSS THEIR INTENSE RELATIONSHIP, TELL WHY THEY CRY A LOT AND EXPLAIN HOW TO DIRECT YOUR BROTHER IN A SEX SCENE

BY STEPHEN REBELLO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HERRING & HERRING

Q1

PLAYBOY: Some brothers can barely stand being in the same room, yet since the early 2000s you two have co-written and co-directed indie movies such as *The Puffy Chair* and *Jeff, Who Lives at Home*; co-produced 20-odd flicks including *The Skeleton Twins* and *The Overnight*; and co-created (with Steve Zissis), co-written and co-directed the HBO series *Togetherness*, which is about to launch its second season. Plus, on the side, you're overseeing a seven-movie Netflix deal, and Mark is a regular actor on both *Togetherness* and *The League* and Jay appears on *Transparent*. If you were to write and direct a movie about what your relationship is *really* like, would skeletons come rattling out of the closet? **MARK:** That movie would be rooted in our childhood and akin to *Life Is Beautiful*—a couple of kids living in the middle of the Holocaust but having this kind of contained, private, safe experience. We had an incredibly uncultivated free-for-all youth in Metairie, a small suburb outside New Orleans. Our dad was a civil trial attorney who could dissect anything, and our mother—this creative bird flying through the sky—stayed home to take care of us. It was wide streets with 1970s-built houses up against the levee and the water—no summer camp, organized sports or play dates, just running in the streets with friends. It was rolling out of school at 2:45 and putting on that unabashedly adult, feelings-based and sex-comedy HBO shit we loved, like *Sophie's Choice*, *Gandhi*, *Ordinary People*, *Tootsie* and

Woody Allen movies, while our friends got stuck on *Ghostbusters* and *Star Wars*.

Q2

PLAYBOY: Sounds idyllic considering the movies you make, but how would that Duplass brothers biopic end?

MARK: Four miles away in New Orleans, where it was dangerous and exciting—but just like a smell, a feeling, as opposed to something real for us. We'd end our movie when Jay was 19 and I was 15 and we'd gone to a strip club about a mile from our house. Tiffany the dancer came out, there was a blast of smoke behind her, and this older gentleman turned to me, grabbed my arm and said, "Where there's smoke, there's *fire*." We knew we'd crossed over.

Q3

PLAYBOY: When women entered your lives, with or without blasts of smoke, did things between you shift or become competitive?

MARK: No, because there's an almost four-year age gap between us. What was always difficult was finding room for girls inside our almost twin-like relationship. We could always be polite and friendly, socially and emotionally, but with women it was always like, "How do we find the space for this?" Over the years it was hard for our girlfriends to be close to each other. That was a hard one to get right. We were driven. We're both married now with kids. We finally had to break up in some way to allow marriage and children to come in.

Q4

PLAYBOY: Was that breakup a "conscious uncoupling," as Gwyneth Paltrow called her divorce?

JAY: Or a semiconscious one. It's a sine-cosine wave that continues to morph and change throughout the years. We're faithful husbands; we're good dads. But then Mark and I will spend three intense months making *Togetherness* and this rhythm will start to come back. After the show is finished, I'll go to Austin with my family for a month. It's hard enough to have one committed relationship. With us, it's like being polygamous.

Q5

PLAYBOY: Growing up, did you two give your parents a lot of grief?

MARK: It was very hard to piss our parents off. When we were really young, we would annoy them daily on a surface level with bullshit kid stuff, like just being assholes in the back of our station wagon. Our dad would get to the point where he'd say, "I'm putting a dollar on the dashboard for every hour you guys are quiet, and you can keep the dollar." These were our conflicts. We were raised with a simple and clear message, which was "You are amazing and you can do anything."

Q6

PLAYBOY: Do you tell your own kids the same thing now?

MARK: We live in Los Angeles, where time is very scheduled and you can't let kids roam. We (continued on page 132)



YEAR

*Our annual roundup of the most ostentatious, salacious
and joyous moments of the past 12 months*

2015
IN

By Nora O'Donnell

SEX

LOVE AND EQUALITY REIGN SUPREME

On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage is a constitutional right. "Today we can say, in no uncertain terms, that we have made our union a little more perfect," President Barack Obama said. We couldn't agree more.



WELCOME, CAITLYN JENNER

The Olympic champion and reality star revealed her gender transition to the world

VANITY FAIR

JULY 2015



"Call me Caitlyn"

by BUZZ BISSINGER Photos by ANNIE LEIBOVITZ

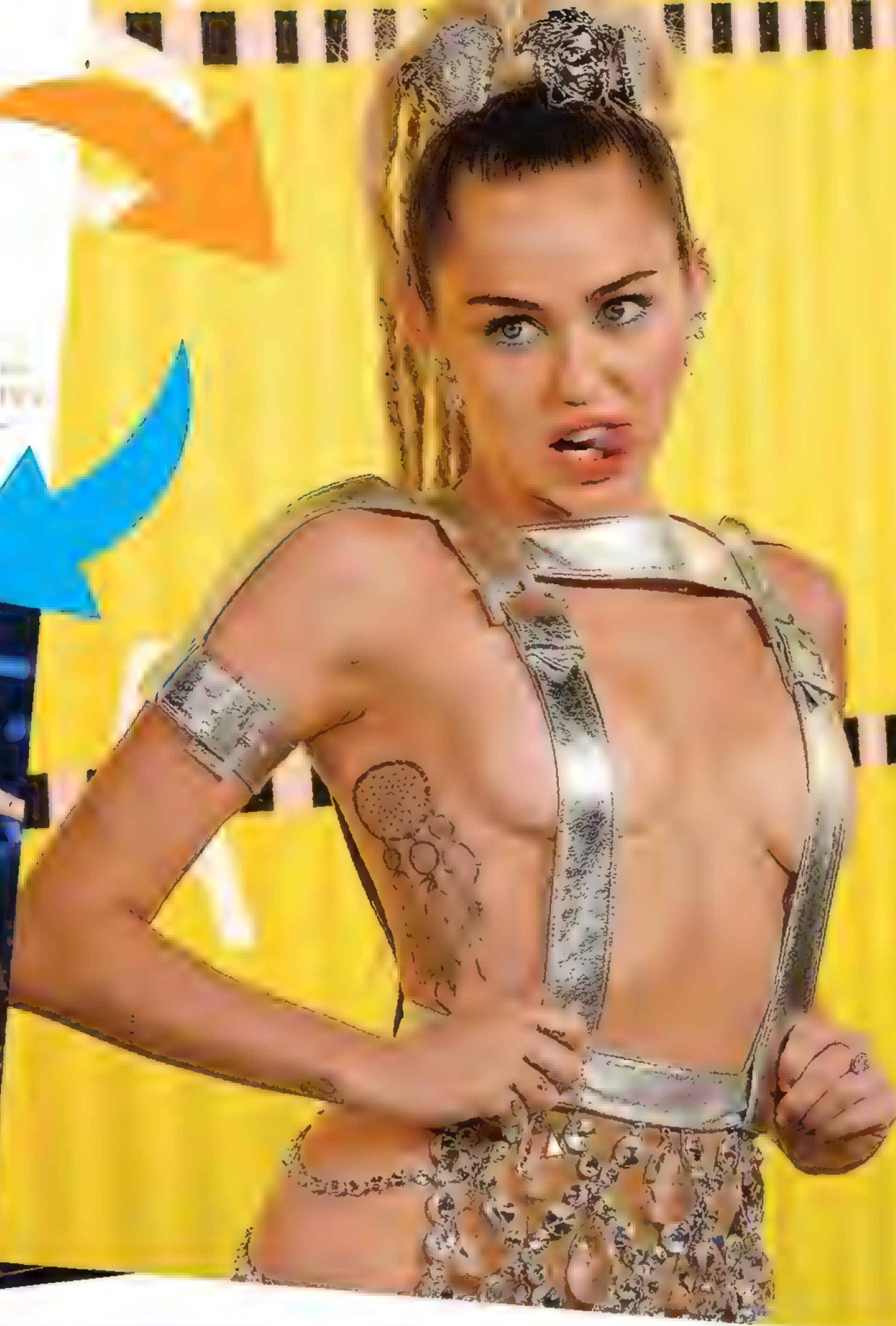


AMBER ROSE'S SLUT WALK

The stripper turned model took to L.A. streets to protest slut shaming and victim blaming. Let us repeat: Sexual violence is *never* okay.



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2015: The year we pulled our gluteus maximus from too much twerking



Been there, done that: In her 2015 memoir, *I'll Never Write My Memoirs*, Grace Jones admits she used to stick tiny rocks of cocaine up her ass back in her Studio 54 days.



Comedian and *Trainwreck* star Amy Schumer has the final word on our behind obsession with her sketch song "Milk, Milk, Lemonade (Round the Corner Fudge Is Made)."



Want a high-tech sex toy that twerks? For just \$699, you can snag Pornhub's Twerking Butt, which jiggles and shakes to music and heats up to a snuggly 98.6 degrees.



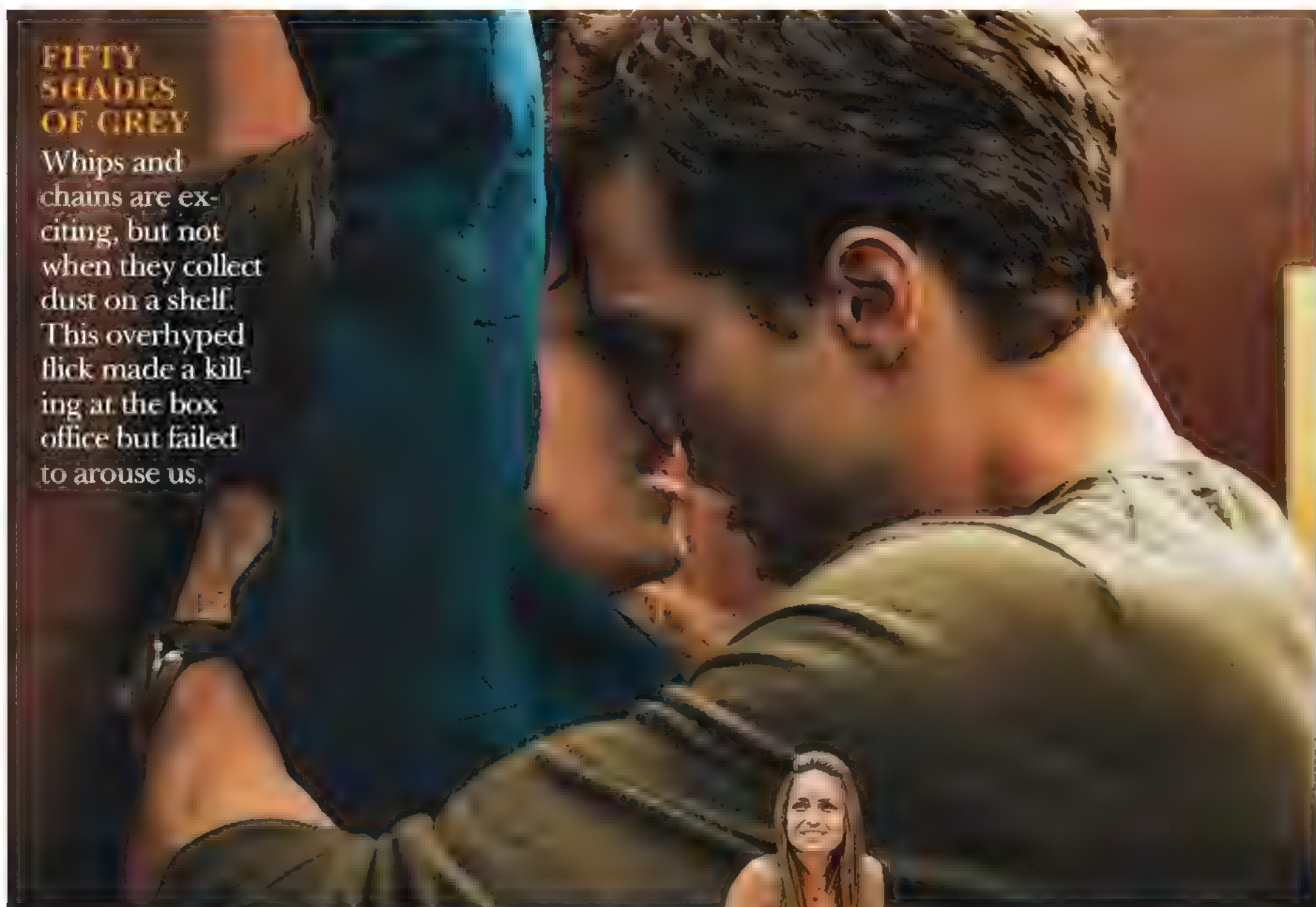
Artist-academic Fannie Sosa teaches global “twerkshops” and claims in her Ph.D. dissertation that twerking descends directly from neolithic fertility dances. The more you know!

SEX in CINEMA

This year's biggest losses and titillations on the big screen...

FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

Whips and chains are exciting, but not when they collect dust on a shelf. This overhyped flick made a killing at the box office but failed to arouse us.



LOVE

The year's most sexually explicit film, from Argentinean director Gaspar Noé, features an abundance of cum shots—all displayed in 3-D.



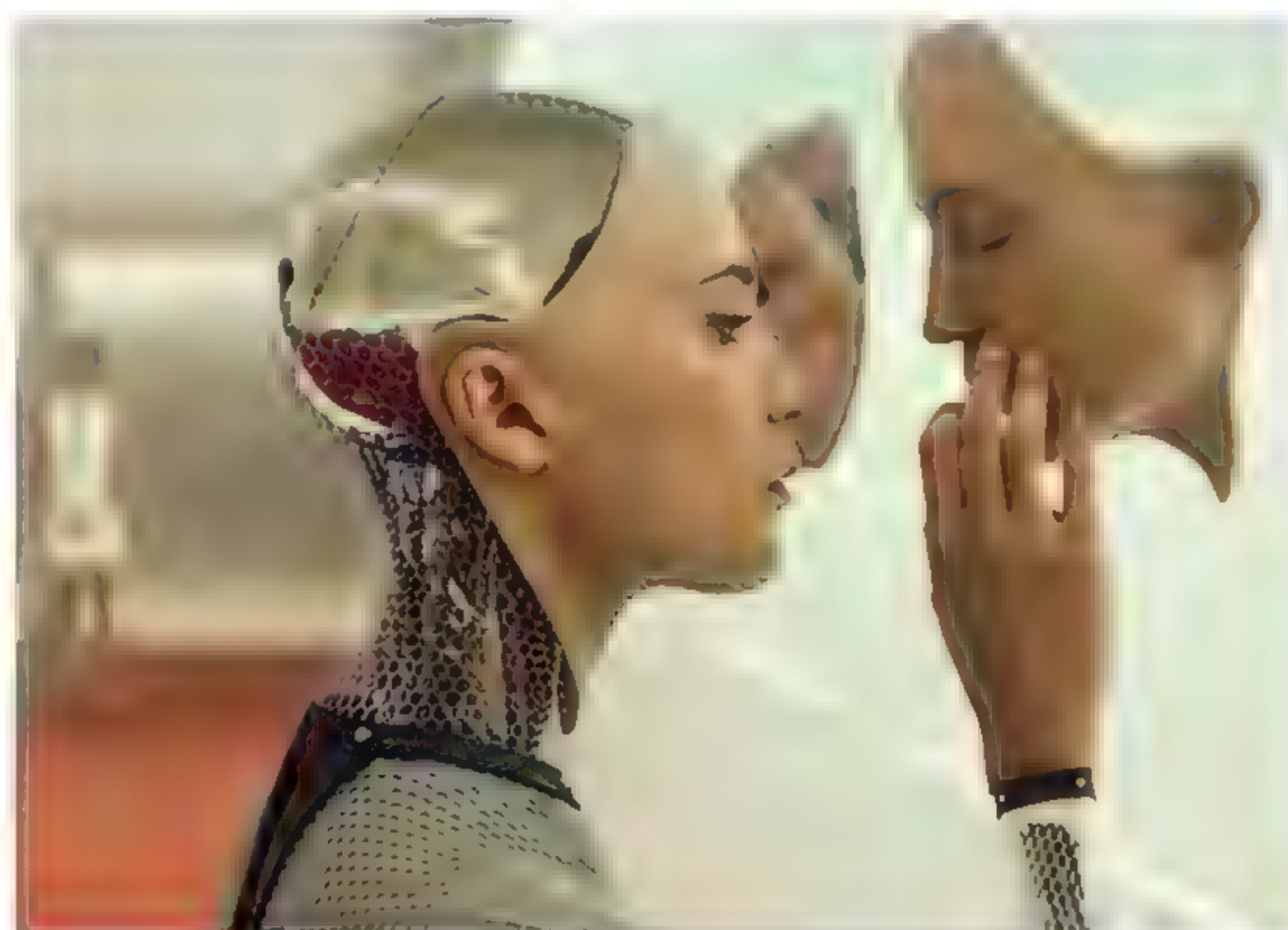
THE OVERNIGHT

Stars Adam Scott and Jason Schwartzman go full-frontal (almost) in this sex comedy equipped with fake penises and an abundance of anus portraits.



INHERENT VICE

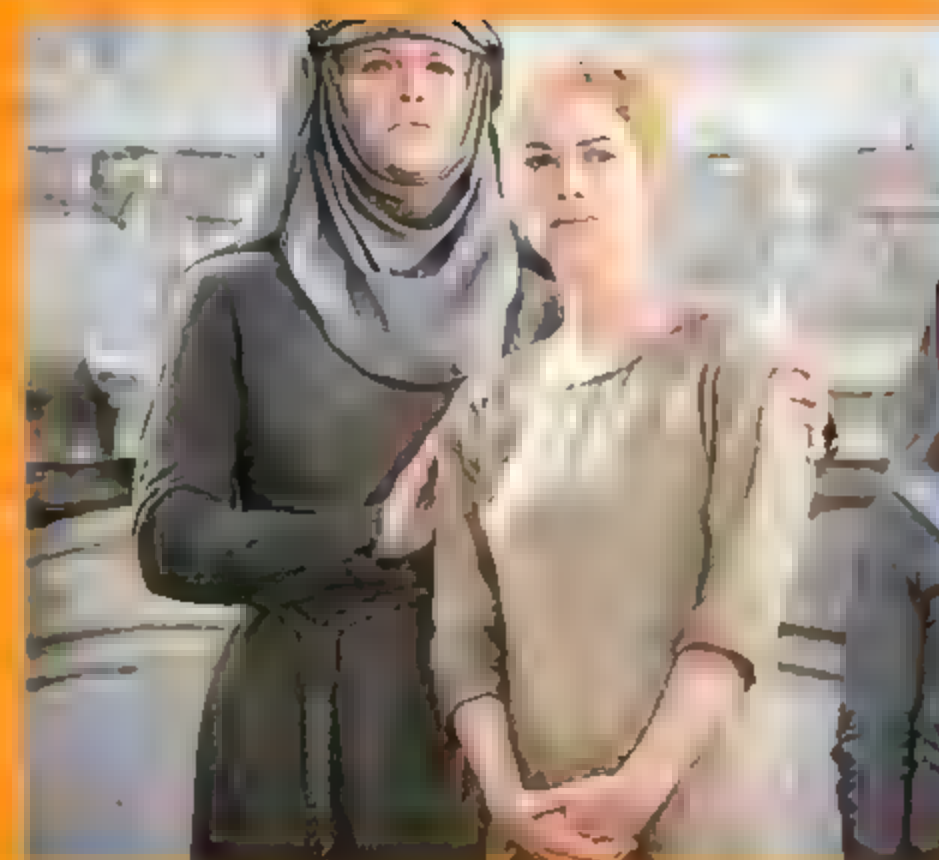
P.T. Anderson tackles Thomas Pynchon's novel in this reefer-filled whodunit set in the 1970s. Duly noted: Katherine Waterston (pictured) delivers a naked monologue.



EX MACHINA

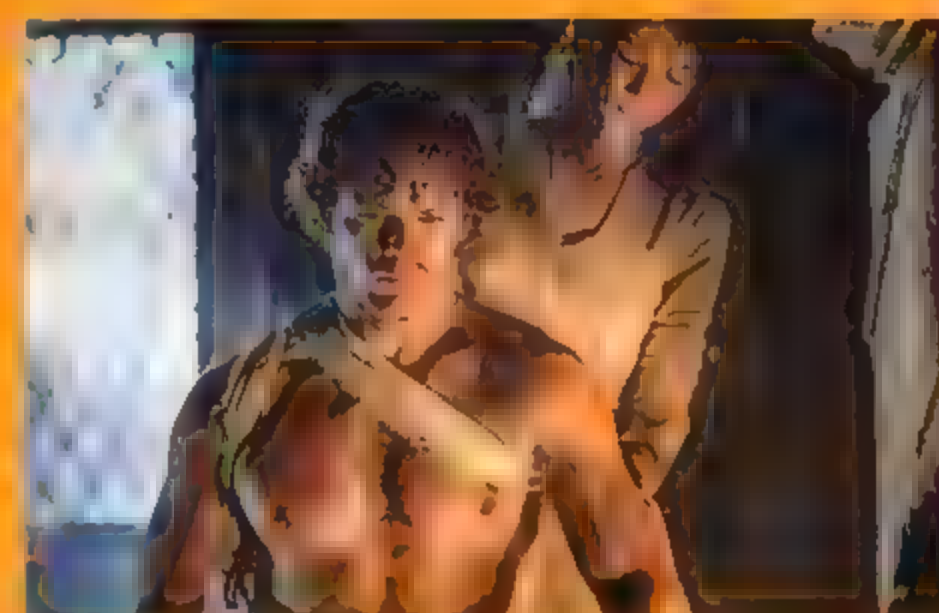
Can robots successfully seduce humans? Star Alicia Vikander makes a strong case for the allure of artificial intelligence, but we aren't ready to go full bot just yet.

Control the world



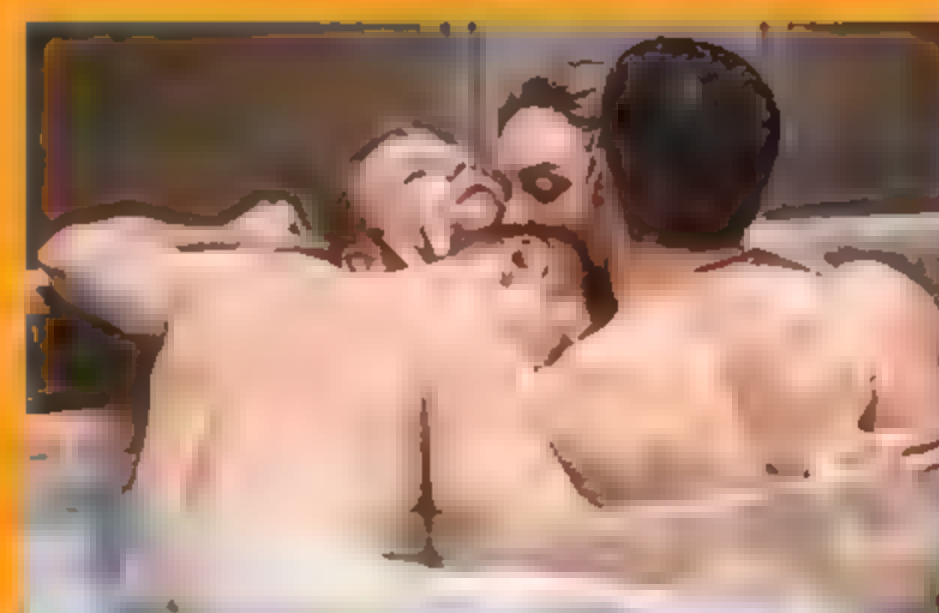
THE GIRL ON THE TRINITY

Let's face it: This is a pretty good book. But the movie is a mess. The only thing it does well is to make you feel like a fool.



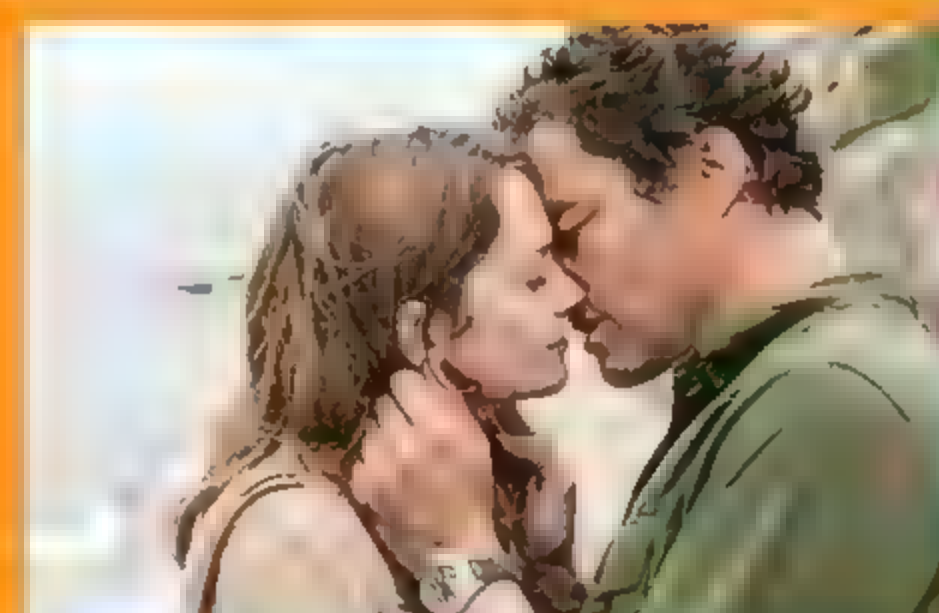
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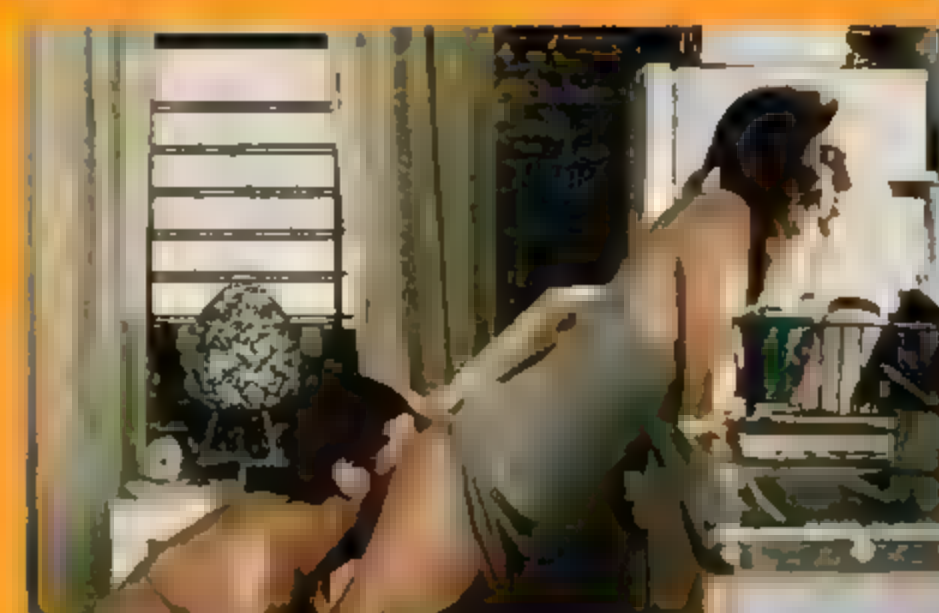
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THE GIRL ON THE TRINITY

Let's face it: This is a pretty good book. But the movie is a mess. The only thing it does well is to make you feel like a fool.

RealDolls Get **ROBOTIC**

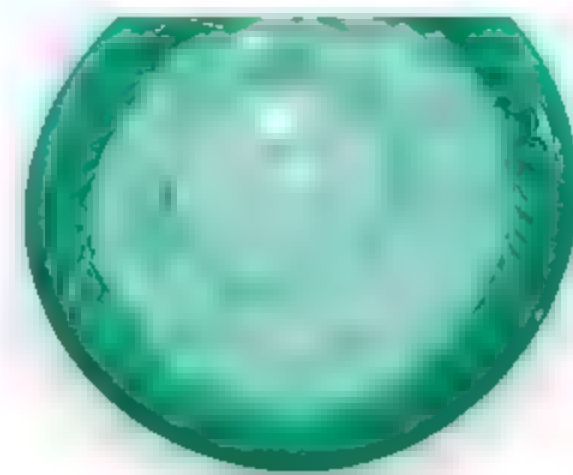
The customizable high-end sex dolls are getting a revolutionary upgrade: animated artificial intelligence. A team of engineers is developing a robotic head attachment that can blink its eyes and open and close its mouth. Full-body animation is next on the list. Estimated cost: \$30,000 to \$60,000.



Good, Weird and



Ugly *Sex* Products



GREEN MEANS GO!

A team of teens invented S.T.EYE., a "smart" condom that changes color when it detects a sexually transmitted infection. Get this on the market, stat!



HELLO THERE

Bringing a whole new meaning to "I Just Called to Say I Love You," this selfie stick lets you FaceTime with the inside of your partner's vagina.



HAIR APPARENT

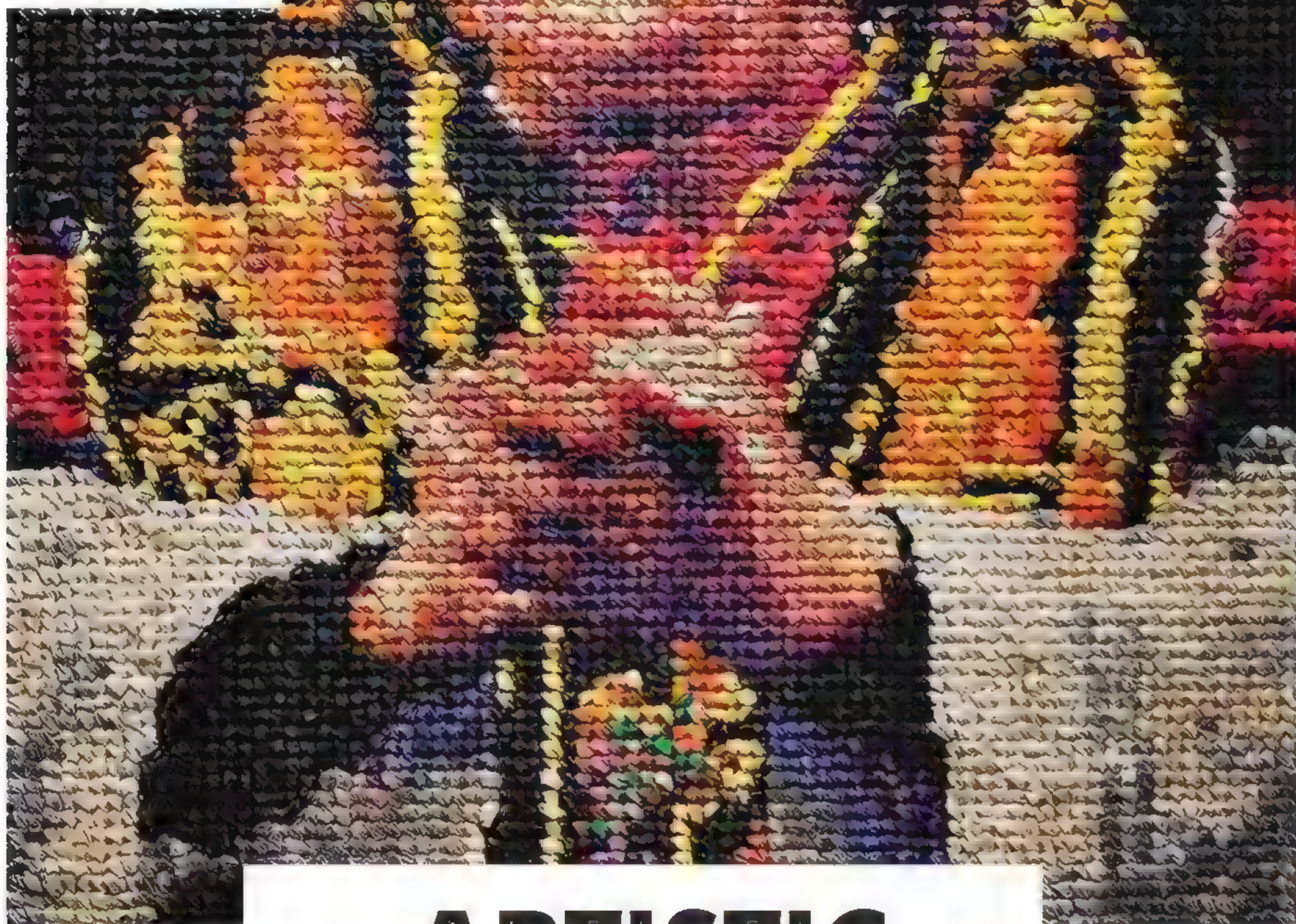
The merkin evolves! An entrepreneur in Sweden sells granny panties made of human hair, which raises the question: Are they machine washable?

SEX, DRUGS & SCIENCE

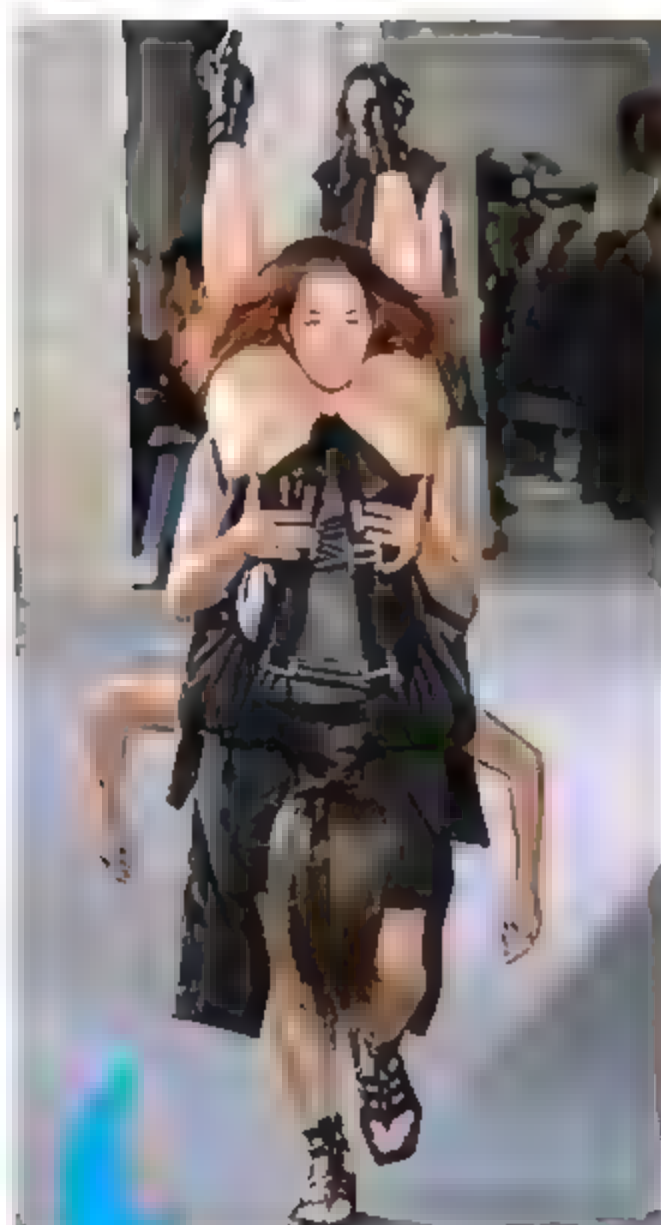


POPE NOPE

Pope Benedict XVI once said handing out condoms would increase AIDS cases; inspired, a Milwaukee artist made a portrait of Benedict out of 17,000 condoms.



ARTISTIC EXPRESSION



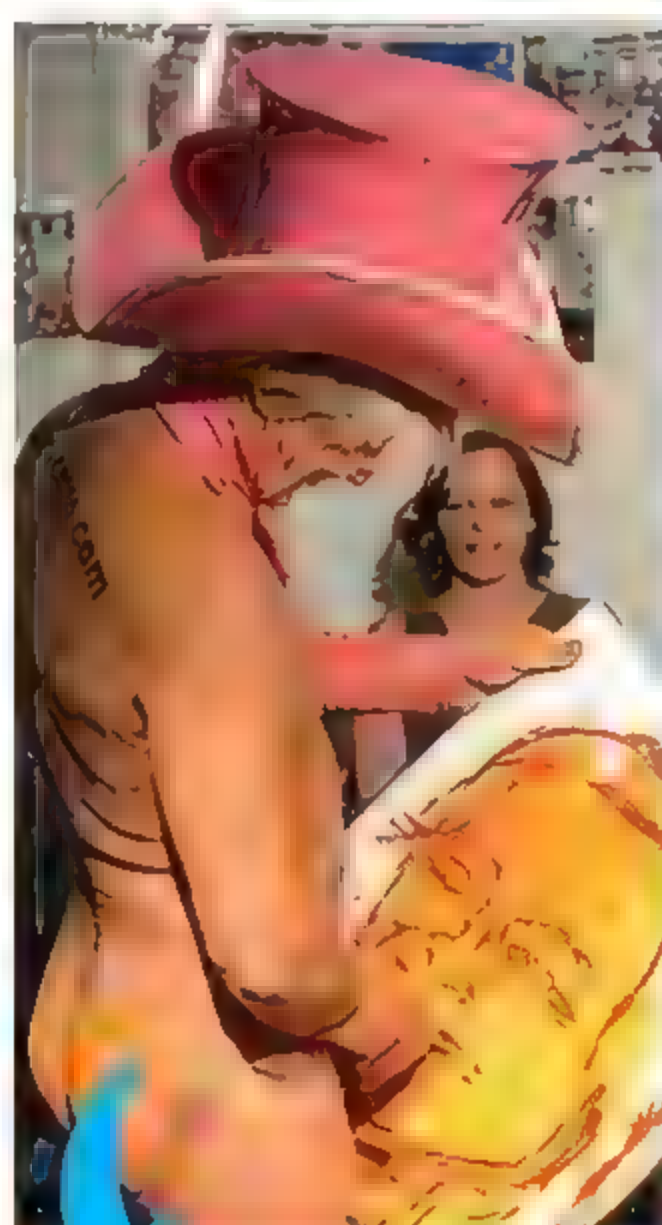
69, DUDES!

Models walk down the runway at the Rick Owens fashion show in Paris, looking very precarious and uncomfortable.



GOD PROBLEMS

A new look at this fresco suggests Priapus, the god of fertility, suffers from phimosis, an inability to retract the foreskin.



PENIS ART

It's been said every artist dips his brush into his own soul. Australia's "Pricasso" takes that notion to a whole new level.



PREZ PEEN

The South African government is none too pleased with this "respectful" satirical painting of President Jacob Zuma's penis.

TOY TIME



PETER PIPER PECKER PUFFER

"One takes a toke, the other gets a poke!" say the makers of this 10-inch-long glass dildo-bong.



21GRAMS

We all grieve in our own way. Now you can put the ashes of your loved one in a sex toy.



OVIPOSITOR

For *Alien* fans and fetishists who enjoy being impregnated with gelatin eggs, this is the toy for you.



RAIDERS OF THE LOST DILDO

Archaeologists discovered this 250-year-old leather dildo filled with bristles in a latrine in Poland.



An American Dream

The multilingual Miss February will melt your winter wonderlust

By SAMUEL EISENMAN

Miss February Kristy Garrett is a true woman of the world. Born in the country of Georgia and raised in southern Russia, Kristy crisscrossed the globe from Munich to Milan to Miami as a fashion model before she caught the eye of PLAYBOY. She speaks six languages, many self-taught, and delights in the places she's visited. As such, her philosophies on matters of the heart are lyrical amalgamations of world culture.

In Italy, where chefs are celebrities in their own right, Kristy learned that cuisine should always be as pleasurable as sex. "Good food can satisfy and relax your brain in the same way," she says. She also learned that love "is the fire you feel when you grab somebody's hand for the first time." In France she grew to embrace natural beauty; last year she appeared on the cover of a popular French fashion magazine wearing no makeup. Having been immersed in numerous art scenes, she describes

music as "a book," with her favorite tunes illustrating the chapters of her life. "At 12, I listened to Mickey Mouse music. At 18, every song became about love and relationships. And now, at 25, my favorite songs are enigmatic, like me." In fact, her idol is none other than the mysterious Mona Lisa. "When people see me, I want them to see me on the inside, what I'm thinking and what I'm feeling."

Now Kristy wants to put down roots in Los Angeles. She's excited to experience the American way, which is why she signed on to pose in these pages, where we immerse her in a world of bomber jackets and muscle cars. "PLAYBOY has a classic American story, and I want to be a part of it," she says. "The lifestyle here, where you're free to express yourself, is my type of life. I am proud of the woman I am and have always dreamed of being talked about because of that." As Miss February, Kristy is sure to make that dream a reality.

KRISTY GARRETT: JAMES

MISS FEBRUARY

MISS FEBRUARY
MISS FEBRUARY
MISS FEBRUARY











MISS FEBRUARY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH







Kristy GARETT

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Kristy GARETT

BUST: 32B WAIST: 23 1/2" HIPS: 34"

HEIGHT: 5'7" WEIGHT: 114 LBS.

BIRTH DATE: 2/13/90 BIRTHPLACE: Tbilisi, Georgia

AMBITIONS: TO LOVE AND BE LOVED IN RETURN. TO GIVE BACK TO THOSE IN NEED, NOT AS A FAMOUS FACE BUT AS MYSELF.

TURN-ONS: NOT QUANTITY, BUT QUALITY. I LIKE A MAN WHO ISN'T AFRAID TO SHOW AFFECTION IN PUBLIC.

TURNOFFS: I'M NOT BORING; I NEED A MAN WHO IS A FIREBALL!

IN A RELATIONSHIP: IF YOU HAVE RESPECT, YOU CAN BUILD EVERYTHING: PASSION, FRIENDSHIP AND FUN.

IT'S DIFFICULT TO HAVE ANYTHING WITHOUT RESPECT... EVEN A REAL ROMANTIC DINNER.

MY DRINKS OF CHOICE: HOT CHOCOLATE AND THEN HOT GREEN TEA THE NEXT DAY... FINISH AND REPEAT.

FINAL WORDS: I WISH EVERYONE LOVE - AND TO NOT BE A NUTELLA ADDICT, UNLESS YOU'RE USING IT IN SPECIAL WAYS....



Naples.



Malibu.



Moscow.



STYLING BY JENNIFER HERREMA; MAKEUP BY KRISTEE LIU AT
TMG-LA; HAIR BY JAMAL HAMMADI





"Wanna pop my cork at midnight?"

WELCOME TO WAKALI- WOOD

IN THE HEART OF UGANDA, TWO AMATEUR FILMMAKERS ARMED WITH A CAST OF UNTRAINED ACTORS, A STACK OF VIOLENT SCRIPTS AND A DREAM OF MAKING IT BIG FIGHT FOR THE PRAISE—AND THE MONEY—OF HOLLYWOOD

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DANIEL C. BRITT

Four Ugandan men hover over a slaughtered goat in Wakaliga, a dusty, sun-soaked slum on the outskirts of Uganda's capital city of Kampala. It's nearly sunset on a Saturday, and a dozen thin-armed locals shuffle around them unfazed, hustling jackfruit and mobile-phone cards.

One of the men cuts off the animal's head. A woman quickly grabs it, claiming it for a fricassee she'll prepare later. The others start shaving the carcass down to its white belly, but it takes time. The slum knives they use are dull, and the goat was spry and fertile. Its short hairs are tightly locked in the epidermal tissue, and their blades shear as efficiently as a butter knife against wet wood.

After a while the carcass stiffens, and the men chop off its legs. A toothy, gangly white man—*mzungu*, they call him, which translates to "white foreigner"—steps into the carcass, its entire digestive tract still intact. (Like the head, the lungs will be cooked on coals for a meal later.)

Braids of goat blood wrap the white man's body like straps. Carcass in tow, he climbs atop a table lined with palm leaves and closes his eyes. His mind travels back to his Franciscan Catholic schooling in South Huntington, New York, when he first vowed to give himself over to a higher good—to cinema and to art. In that pursuit, the *mzungu* volunteered at film festivals, worked as a production assistant on a TV show and lived out of his car. Now he is lying inside a mutilated mammal in a red-dirt ghetto where people shit in bags, bathe in buckets and learn to enjoy the parasites picked up from a chicken—or a goat.







1. Alan Hofmanis prepares to be dismembered by cannibals for *Eaten Alive in Uganda*. 2. Wakaliwood's leading kung fu expert and fight choreographer, Bukunya Charles. 3. Golola Moses, a local kickboxing champ turned actor, poses with a scrap-metal machine gun. 4. Isaac Nabwana brandishes his toy pistol.



The men surrounding the *mzungu* are costumed in tribal garb and bone jewelry to look like cannibals. The bones around their necks look remarkably like those of a child, but in fact they are from canines. Two of the men spent days boiling down dead dogs they'd found by the roadside and stringing the most human-looking remains into necklaces, maintaining the slanted symmetry that was so popular during the Upper Paleolithic period. Details matter.

As the cannibals gather around the table, the white man twitches, trying to remain still. "God, this is so warm," he mumbles.

Off to the side, Isaac Nabwana stands directing the cannibals in his native Luganda. He reminds them it's their first taste of sweet *mzungu* flesh. When one snorts, growls and stomps a few times, Nabwana decides they're ready

to start chewing on the animal's intestines and large swatches of its flesh. He breaks the choppy native dialogue with a single word in English: "Action!"

The men begin to ferociously grab the goat innards and chew on the flesh. The *mzungu* screams bloody murder until Nabwana shouts another word, again in English.

"Cut!"

The actors spit out the chalky, iron-tasting organs, wipe off their tongues and stuff the intestines back into the carcass. They position themselves as before and stand waiting for their director's cues, ready for another take. This is filmmaking, Uganda style.

•

Uganda's most prolific director has never stepped foot inside a movie theater. In fact, 43-year-old Isaac Nabwana rarely leaves the three-room brick home he built for his wife, Harriet, and their three small children in Kampala's slum. But Nabwana has become Uganda's most famous film director, leading a surge in filmmaking so profuse that local *boda-boda* (motorcycle taxi) drivers have renamed the Wakaliga slum "Wakaliwood." A 47-second clip from his first film, the bullet-riddled *Who Killed Captain Alex?*, has been watched on

Facebook more than 11 million times. Now his films are catching the attention of bloggers and journalists from around the world. Last year, documentarians from the BBC trekked to Kampala solely to interview Nabwana. More notably, a minute-long clip from the same film was enough to convince a then 41-year-old white man from New York named Alan Hofmanis to give up his life in the big city and relocate to the Wakaliga slum to work with Nabwana.

"Isaac is the only one out there with something totally new to say," says Hofmanis of the super-low-budget, outlandishly violent Wakaliwood aesthetic. "If he were shooting films for under \$200 in Brooklyn, as he is here, and getting the same kind of response, he'd be a folk hero."

Nabwana has produced, written and directed more than 40 low-budget, feature-length action films, but no one in the West would call him an auteur. After scenes from *Captain Alex* hit YouTube in 2010 and raked in millions of views, people pigeonholed Nabwana's plots and characters as either slurs on Africa or sociological specimens to be examined like the stitching in pygmy masks—in any case, not footage to be consumed by the moviegoing public. One film distributor compared the clips to a viral cat video. "For years no one could see them for what they are—genre films, action comedies," says Hofmanis. Now, Nabwana and the *mzungu* are collaborating on what will be Uganda's first action-film trilogy, which they hope to debut this year at the Festival de Cannes. "Isaac is an artist, but no one (continued on page 134)





"It's really not a party without champagne."

CARS OF THE YEAR

From a supercar that leaves us begging for more track time to a compact that has us completely sold on getting practical, here's our list of the best new models and innovations in automotive design

BY MARCUS AMICK

THE SUPERHERO
WINNER
Mercedes-Benz
AMG GT S
\$129,000

There comes a point while driving the Mercedes AMG GT S when you feel yourself transforming from a mere mortal into something of a caped crusader. It's hard to pinpoint whether this change occurs when you rev the car's bi-turbo V8 or when you dial through

the five selectable drive modes. But the more you indulge in the 503-horsepower coupe, the more compelled you are to play the role. Make no mistake about it: The motivation to finally pursue that career change doesn't get any better than this.



BRAND MVP **WINNER**

Mazda MX-5 Miata \$24,915

With a starting price under \$25,000, Mazda's fourth-gen iteration of its flagship roadster earns it the kind of street cred typically reserved for high-end exotics. Powered by a 155-horsepower two-liter engine, the incredibly light and nimble MX-5 is a vivid reminder that some

of the biggest thrills often come in small packages. There's a reason Miatas are the most commonly raced cars on the amateur circuits: They're true sports cars in the tradition of the great Italian and British roadsters. And now the MX-5 is in a league of its own.

BEST COMEBACK **WINNER**

Volkswagen Golf R \$35,650

The new Golf R is true to the VW hatch's reputation as an all-out performer. In addition to staking its claim as the most powerful Golf ever sold in the States, the turbocharged 292-horsepower R is now available with a six-speed manual transmission (and we mean stick shift, not paddle shifters) that raises the excitement level even higher.



TOP COMPETITOR **WINNER**

Cadillac ATS-V Coupe \$62,665

Vying for respect as a new high-performance luxury two-seater is tough regardless of what badge adorns the vehicle. But that didn't stop Cadillac from

taking a shot at the segment with a hot new contender in 2015. The V series follow-up to the standard ATS takes direct aim at European makes with a fearless

464-horsepower twin-turbo V6 that proves the guys across the pond aren't the only ones capable of engineering a ballsy luxury coupe.



HOTTEST NEW ENTRY WINNER

Jeep Renegade Trailhawk \$25,995

Looking to build on its legacy, Jeep has proven that the brand's coveted cool factor isn't limited to the iconic Wrangler or its more menacing stablemate, the 475-horsepower Grand Cherokee SRT. The new Renegade Trailhawk features many things we've come to love about Jeeps, including an available open-air My Sky roof and true four-by-four capabilities in a compact size that's perfect for the city. You may find yourself struggling with whether to call it an SUV or a crossover, but it wears both hats well.



COOLEST CUSTOMIZER WINNER

Dodge Viper GTC: 1 of 1 Service
\$94,995



One downside of coughing up a lot of cash for a sports car is that there's usually no escaping the fact that somewhere out there another guy owns a car just like yours. The Dodge Viper 1 of 1 service (launched in 2015) spices things up with 8,000 hand-painted custom exterior colors, 24,000 custom stripes, 10 wheel options, 16 interior trims and six aero packages, providing more than 25 million unique configurations for the 645-horsepower American coupe. Paying top dollar *should* come with unique bragging rights.

COOLEST MAKEOVER WINNER

Lexus RX 450 Hybrid F Sport
\$57,045

Giving up that sports car for a family vehicle is never easy. But if there were ever a convincing argument for crossing over to a hybrid, this Lexus is it. Inspired by the design of the sleek Lexus RC coupe, the new RX 450h F Sport flaunts a blackout mesh grille and matching 20-inch wheels that will quickly sell you on the idea. The 308-horsepower all-wheel-drive hybrid also features an exclusive rioja red interior, a three-spoke sport steering wheel, a drilled-aluminum accelerator and brake pedals that make the shift from roving bachelor to reliable father easier to swallow.

2016 Tech Trendsetters

AUDI MMI ALL-IN-TOUCH

Audi's MMI all-in-touch navigation ranks as one of the best in the industry. Designed to function much



like a smartphone, the revised system allows both the driver and the front passenger to navigate infotainment features using multifinger gestures and a

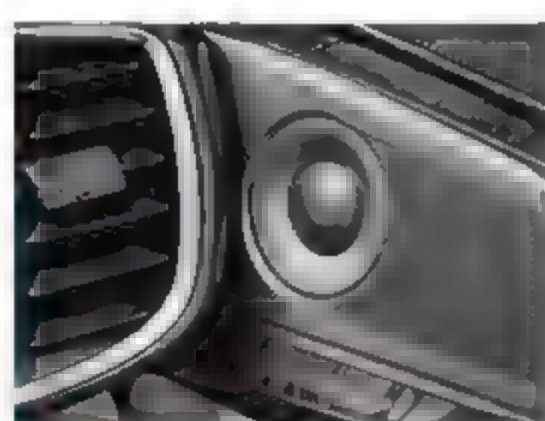
voice-command system that actually recognizes your voice.

LINCOLN REVEL ULTIMA AUDIO

Introduced in the 2016 Lincoln MKX, the Revel Ultima (an exclusive Harman brand) uses a specially crafted 19-speaker configuration to deliver a listening experience that's as close to a live performance as car audio systems get.

TESLA AUTOPILOT SYSTEM

If there were any doubts



about whether the future would feature autonomous vehicles, Tesla officially laid them to rest in 2015 with the release of its version 7.0 software and new autopilot system. Featured on the Model S, the update uses a number of high-tech gadgets, including a forward radar, 12 long-range ultrasonic sensors

and a digitally controlled electric-assist braking system that allows for hands-free steering within a lane and for lane changing with the simple tap of a turn signal.





GREATEST ICON | WINNER

Ford Shelby GT350 \$47,795

No vehicle that launched last year generated more buzz than the 2016 Shelby GT350—and for good reason. The new track-tuned Mustang completely redefines American muscle with a number of Ford firsts, such as a 526-horsepower flat-plane crankshaft V8

and a high-tech suspension system that makes the car as fun cornering through canyons as it is growling down straightaways. Through and through, the striped, lower-profile Mustang variant is a tribute to Carroll Shelby that will be tough to follow in the years to come.



BIGGEST BANG FOR THE BUCK | WINNER

Chevrolet Camaro 1LT 3.6L V6 \$26,695

For its latest-edition Camaro, the team at Chevy decided to zero in on major performance enhancements across the line-up rather than make sweeping design changes. The result is a lighter 335-horsepower V6 Camaro that builds on the muscle car's classic appeal in a model that has the highest output of any naturally aspirated vehicle in its class. Still, the fact that Chevy has managed to keep the car's cost well below \$30,000 while adding more features is the most impressive thing about it.



PAMELA

PLAYMATE. ACTRESS. ACTIVIST. ICON. PAMELA ANDERSON REDEFINES WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A BOMBSHELL. FOR HER HISTORIC SHOOT AT THE PLAYBOY MANSION, PLAYBOY CONTRIBUTOR JAMES FRANCO FINDS OUT WHAT MAKES PAMELA RUN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELLEN VON UNWERTH



I DON'T THINK OF MYSELF AS BEAUTIFUL, BUT I KNOW I HAVE A DEEP, SENSUAL DRIVE.



t's hard to believe it has been more than 26 years since a ravishing and spirited young woman from Vancouver Island made her first appearance in *PLAYBOY*, but 13 covers later it's clear Pamela Denise Anderson has secured a place in history as our most beloved Playmate. For her record 14th cover, we enlisted James Franco to interview the Marilyn Monroe of our time. The resulting conversation between these two creative minds is breezy, a little brainy and the antithesis of boring.

FRANCO: Let's go back to October 1989. Tell me how your first cover happened. You were spotted at a football game, right?

ANDERSON: [Laughs] Yeah. The cameraman zoomed in on me and everyone screamed and yelled, so they brought me down to the 50-yard line. I was wearing a

Labatt Blue T-shirt, and Labatt ended up giving me a commercial. From there, *PLAYBOY* called and flew me down. I'd never been on a plane before.

FRANCO: You hadn't?

ANDERSON: No. I came from a tiny town, Ladysmith, on Vancouver Island.

FRANCO: How was the shoot?

ANDERSON: The photographer shot me in one roll of film because I was nervous and throwing up. But then I saw the pictures, and from there it was hard to keep my clothes on! I was painfully shy before, but then it clicked in my head that nobody cares what you look like naked except you. People are more concerned about themselves and their own flaws.

FRANCO: How old were you then?

ANDERSON: Twenty-two.

FRANCO: Why do you think you were shy?

ANDERSON: I think society tells you you're supposed to be modest, but I didn't have a very modest family. My dad was a bad boy and my mom was a buxom blonde bombshell. In response, I tried to control my environment.

FRANCO: What did you want to be before *PLAYBOY* came calling?

ANDERSON: I didn't know. I've always been very imaginative, and I thought I would do something creative. I just knew I had to get out of my small town. I never wanted to be in this industry; I didn't know that option existed for me. It wasn't something I pursued. But I guess I've done pretty well for myself just going with the flow.

FRANCO: What's the craziest thing that has happened to you at the Mansion?

ANDERSON: Oh dear, so much. But you know, when people kiss and tell, they're usually lying. I don't want to get too detailed, but I'm sure one of my sons was conceived there. [Laughs]

FRANCO: Tell me about your recent return to acting.

ANDERSON: Now that my kids are grown, I've had fun over the past year doing some great little projects, like the indie film *The People Garden* and the short film *Connected* by photographer-director Luke Gilford. These projects are more character driven and unlike anything I've experienced before. I'm experimenting. I still don't know if I'm any good at acting, but I'm taking it a lot more seriously now, and I'm

fascinated. I've been fortunate to have some incredibly creative people around me who want to give me opportunities. Like Werner Herzog called me——

FRANCO: Really? What did he say?

ANDERSON: Well, first I thought, Holy crap, the man who directed *Fitzcarraldo* wants to meet with me! We had lunch at Chateau Marmont, and he told me, "You are something special. You need to be on the big screen." I couldn't believe he said that. He has a project in mind for me, and I hope it materializes. The fact that I'm on his radar is really flattering.

FRANCO: You have so many qualities, but my guess is when people think of you, they think first of your beauty. What is it like to live a life like that?

ANDERSON: I don't quite know how to answer that. I don't think of myself as beautiful, but I know I have a deep, sensual drive. People respond to that more than physicality because your spirit never ages. I'm a bit of an exhibitionist, and I like being playful and having fun.

FRANCO: It seems to me you don't hide from what you are.

ANDERSON: Well, you have to be yourself. That's the hardest thing to be. I've been in professional environments where people have tried to change me, and that's when I become like the Hulk and just rip them off my back. Then I'm back to being myself. I try to live my life as honestly as I can.

FRANCO: I have your Playmate *Data Sheet* from 1990.

ANDERSON: Oh dear.

FRANCO: Under "Ambitions" you wrote, "To win an Oscar."

ANDERSON: How funny is that? It was a joke!

FRANCO: But who knows?

ANDERSON: You never know.

FRANCO: If you do Werner's movie, then maybe. What are your ambitions today?

ANDERSON: I don't know what's next, but I feel like something is percolating. I don't know if it's a movie or if it's a love affair, but something is trying to get me, and I'm open to it. [Laughs]

FRANCO: For turn-ons you wrote, "Sincerity, honesty, strong arms, waffles and fried chicken."

ANDERSON: That's because Mario took me to a waffle and fried chicken place—this was before I stopped eating chicken.

FRANCO: Mario who? Mario Van Peebles?

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANCO: Did you date him?

ANDERSON: Kind of. Yeah. Maybe.

FRANCO: So when you wrote that, you were thinking about a date with Mario at Roscoe's Waffles.

ANDERSON: Probably! [Laughs]

FRANCO: What do you like now?

ANDERSON: Honesty and sincerity. You know, that's hard to find around here. But someone unusual, that's for sure.

FRANCO: "Turnoffs: Possessive men, jealous people, insensitive people and split ends." I'm guessing possessive men are still a turnoff.

ANDERSON: Yes, they are, but they're everywhere. It's hard to love without attachment, even for me.

FRANCO: Last one: "Being a Playmate means: The start of something big." Do you think that was true?

ANDERSON: I think so. I always thought I would stay in Los Angeles if I found work, and if I didn't, I would go home. And then the work never ended. I think I've had a pretty fun life.

FRANCO: I'll say.



















HUGH M HEFNER





CROW COUNTRY MOSES

Continued from page 68

My large red pack—the kind supposedly favored by hikers on the Appalachian Trail (a gift from my father)—and my father's wheeled leather suitcases. My father's fly rods in their cylindrical leather cases were there, as well as two of my father's side-by-side 20-gauge shotguns in their fleece-lined leather cases. One of these very shotguns, incidentally, I had stolen from the unlocked gun case in his den and tried to pawn when I was 15 years old. This was 16 years ago during what my father eventually came to call my “rough patch,” a hazy span of time nearly a year in duration during which I stole rampantly and masturbated frantically, sometimes five to six times a day. My father was aware of the theft, obviously; of the masturbation I'm not sure, although I wouldn't be surprised, as I stole a copy of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*, leaving a noticeable hole in the volumes on the shelves in his den. I kept the leather-bound volume under clothes in my closet and abused myself to a pulp daily in that very closet, the wooden folding doors shut behind me, the chain for the overhead light dangling over my head where I knelt with my jeans around my ankles, my favorite passages dog-eared for easy reference.

I stole mostly from my father's house but occasionally from the houses of my friends—rarely ever from stores or people I didn't know. I stole a Montblanc pen and a fake Rolex watch from the father of a friend of mine who was a federal judge. I stole a set of Wüsthof knives from my father's kitchen and spent half a day throwing them at trees in the woods behind the house. I stole a necklace from my mother. It had once been my grandmother's; quite possibly it had been her mother's. It was old, medieval looking, the gold tarnished from the multigenerational sweat of the matriarchy. I stole every ash-tray from my father's house and spent half an afternoon throwing them at trees in the woods behind the house. I stole five bamboo fly rods—made by a certain R.L. Winston in Twin Bridges, Montana—from my father's den and spent half an afternoon splintering them magnificently in a vicious sword fight battle with a friend of mine in the woods behind the house. During this time I masturbated, mostly in my closet, but in many other places as well: in

the woods behind the house, in all of the various outbuildings on my father's property (the garden shed, the guest house, the garage, the other garage), in every room of my father's house including the attic (excluding my father's den), in the bathroom at my school and in the bathroom at the Lutheran church we attended once a year on Easter Sunday.

The day I stole the shotgun was much like any other day that year. I attended school five blocks from my house, a distance I walked. I got home from school and masturbated once or twice, ate something that I could microwave easily and then looked around for something to steal. I sat in my father's den, swiveling in his chair behind the large empty oak desk. I took one of a matched pair of side-by-side 20-gauge shotguns—made by a certain James Purdey & Sons of London, England—and a handful of shells, and I went to the woods behind the house where I spent an hour or two shooting at the tree trunks. When I ran out of shells, I put the shotgun in my backpack with the barrel jutting through the zippered opening and rode my bike six miles to a pawnshop that had a row of 10-speed bikes chained together on the sidewalk and glass with steel mesh embedded in it for windows. The man who owned the store also lived in an apartment above the business with two daughters; his wife had died of breast cancer when the girls were young. I would lose my virginity to one of the pawnshop man's daughters a year after the shotgun incident. Her name was Sara and she was two years older than me—and for an event that I had anticipated for so long, to this day I don't really remember much about it at all, whether it was awkward or sweet or even whether or not she was pretty.

When I walked into the pawnshop, I was still wearing the backpack, the twin shotgun barrels sticking up over my head. The pawnshop man undoubtedly knew my father or at least knew enough of him to know that he could be found in the phone book under Swank & Howe, Attorneys at Law, but instead of calling my father, the pawnshop man in fact called the police. As it turns out, the pawnshop man was enough of a firearms expert to notice that the gun I dropped on his counter—with its fine blued barrels and elegant scrollwork, the etched scene of a pheasant flushing in front of a pointer (whose tail was so finely rendered it was possible to see the breeze ruffling in the hair)—was probably valued at more than \$30,000 and most certainly stolen.

That was my childhood. I trafficked in rare antique munitions and jacked off to first editions. It's not that I was dumb. It's just that I really hadn't the slightest idea what things were worth.

•

This was our first trip together since my mother's death. We mostly drove in silence. We never did find the Little

Bighorn Battlefield, but truth be told, neither of us really cared that much about history. We had a few hours before we needed to be at the airport in Billings, and it seemed like the right thing to do. We pulled off the highway at Lodge Grass for gas, my father driving slowly on empty streets. A dog here and there. A burnt shell of a trailer house with smoke still breathing from broken windows. A Catholic mission and health clinic with mostly intact windows, and an IGA with broken windows covered by sheets of corrugated cardboard. We passed a faded sign for Custer's Last (ice cream) Stand. The sign had a cartoon image of Custer, blond hair and cavalry hat, holding a triple-scoop ice cream cone, his tongue out as if he were licking the ice cream off his drooping blond mustache. There was an arrowhead and fletching protruding from either side of his head as if the shaft had entered one ear and come out the other side. There were people on a front porch that sloped toward the street. Teenagers in dark stocking caps and coats and black baggy jeans; some had sunglasses on.

“I have been here before,” my father said, “but it was in Detroit.”

We stopped at a 7-Eleven where there was one window broken and one window not; the broken window had been replaced by a sheet of plywood. The 7-Eleven was busy with locals. It was a dry reservation, and apparently this was the watering hole. A trio of dusty diesel trucks pulling horse trailers commanded the parking lot, and furtively I watched their occupants. All of them wore dark-brimmed Stetsons and dark Wranglers tucked into dark leather boots. Some of them had braids and some of them had their hair cropped short above the ears. A few wore belts studded with oval slabs of turquoise and fastened with large silver buckles. The young men were lean and acne-ridden and the older men had compact potbellied stomachs straining against the dark, striped work shirts tucked into their pants. The older men had coffee in Styrofoam cups and pocked faces and the young men had plastic bottles of Pepsi and candy bars and legs that curved like empty parentheses.

They swung into their trucks, and diesel fumes filled the parking lot and the crazy-eyed paint horses in the trailers stamped their feet. It was clear that the Indians had become cowboys or that the cowboys had all turned into Indians or that the Indians were all cowboys to begin with just nobody ever noticed. Well, maybe that wasn't clear, but what was clear was the fact that something wasn't quite right.

I got out to stretch my legs while my father pumped the gas. Our rental car was a small silver pony. The red clay clotting the panels made it look as if our pony had taken an arrow in its forelock and its heaving sides were fouled with sprayed blood and chunks of lung matter. I took my hand, pressed it into the red gumbo, then reached and made a splayed red handprint in the middle



"That will be enough of that!"

of our silver pony's chest, right over the engine. We left Lodge Grass in silence.

The fishing hadn't been very good this trip. My father had hired us a guide, a young guy about my age, with shaggy hair, who spent most of the day apologizing. "I don't know," he would say. "Usually it's better than this. Fish can be fickle."

"Well, hell," my father said. "At least we have the scenery. There's worse things we could be doing. At least we're not at work." For some reason then, I became acutely aware that the guide, hunched miserably at the oars, was indeed at work. I wondered what he thought of us. At the end of the day my father gave the guide two crumpled \$100 bills and told him it was the best day he could remember having for quite some time.

After, in the car driving to our hotel, my father said, "Sorry the fishing was so bad. I'd hoped it would be better. But that's the problem with having a young guide. When the fishing is good, it's not so bad. The young guide is going to work for it, keep you out late—he's enthusiastic, see? But when the fishing's off, you're screwed. No amount of enthusiasm is going to make up for lack of experience. I know if we would have had some old crusty salt out there today we would have caught plenty. But that's how it goes. That's why they call it fishing, not catching."

This was a phrase my father loved. Often he applied it to situations that had nothing to do with fishing. Once, I called him in misery after a longtime girlfriend had left me. After a few consoling words his closing remarks were "Well, son, that's why they call it fishing, not catching."

I looked over at my father, driving, still in his fishing vest and obnoxious fishing hat, the one with the sweat-stained band and a line of ragged flies stuck in the brim.

"Maybe it's just us," I said. "Maybe we're

not that good. I bet the guide is somewhere right now talking about how when the fishing is bad it really sucks to have poor fishermen."

My father laughed at this. "Could be," he said. "I guess there is always the other side of the coin."

I thought about the night they admitted my mother to the hospital in Grand Rapids. I'd come as soon as I could but she was already in the ICU. I sat with my father there, all night. When the doctor came out to talk to us, I remember my father's ill-concealed disbelief, his rage. The doctor looked all of 22, a young woman with henna-colored hair and a nose ring, who spoke in clipped British tones.

"Your wife has suffered a powerful stroke," she said. "She is not responding to treatment."

"And who are you, chippie?" my father said. "Just who the fuck do you think you are? Where is the doctor in charge?"

In the waiting room, the TV had been turned to a channel running some sort of classic Western marathon. Eastwood. Peckinpah. Bronson. McQueen. Kristofferson. All the dramatic gunfights, the stolen horses, the barroom brawls, the slow pinwheeling deaths. We watched these movies, a seemingly endless loop, blurring together in one continuous meandering story line, and then, sometime after dawn, the doctor came out again to break the news to us. This time my father had nothing to say to her. I shook her hand. I thanked her. I don't know why.

Eventually, after driving around aimlessly for almost an hour, we got out the map and found our way back to the highway and the airport. But before we did, we passed through a small town, a blink-and-you'll-miss-it type of place—a post office, a laundromat, a small Baptist church with graffiti sprayed on the brick—the whole

place unremarkable except for the mounds of tumbleweed piled up against every standing surface. It was bizarre, like the weeds were some sort of fast-reproducing vermin threatening to overtake the town. We hadn't seen a single sign of inhabitation. The whole place was empty, except, in the parking lot of a run-down motel, there was a pile of tumbleweed burning. The flames towered over a man, wearing fluorescent orange sunglasses, who stood with a hose in his hand to keep the fire from spreading. The man had a dark ponytail, and he held the hose like a six-gun. As we passed, my father did something remarkable, a thing that I will never forget. He pointed at the flaming tumbleweed and the man with the hose. My father's hand was a cocked six-gun.

"Crow country Moses confronts the burning bush," he said, and began humming the theme song to *The Magnificent Seven*.

I joined him. We did this for miles.

At the airport, we sat at the terminal and waited for our flight. My father had a bag of trail mix and was digging through it for the almonds. We could see out past the planes staging on the runway, the flat expanse of just-greening grassland. Antelope were grazing. A plane came in to land, and its shadow moved directly over their backs and they didn't even look up.

"You want some of this?" my father said, shoving the bag of trail mix toward me.

"Did you eat all the almonds?"

"I think so."

"Why don't you just buy a bag of almonds? They had those for sale right next to the trail mix."

"I like searching them out amongst the other stuff I don't want."

"Seems like a waste."

"I'm offering what's left to you."

"I'm not hungry."

"Well, then you're the one that's being wasteful, not me. All I can do is offer." He was still wearing his fishing hat. His stained vest. The sunburn on his nose was starting to peel.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'll just save the bag. Maybe someone on the plane will want them."

"That's not what I meant."

"Oh. You mean what am I going to do. I don't know. I'm 62 years old. She managed the office for 32 years. Can you believe it? Men say stuff like this all the time, but I wouldn't have acquired half of what I've got now if it wasn't for her. I was thinking today, you and I are too much alike. You know that if she was with us there is no way in hell we wouldn't've found that damn battlefield. She would have had the directions printed up last week. A brief synopsis of important facts regarding the massacre, and the location of a nearby café whose lunch menu featured reasonably priced healthful options with a local flair."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"If it wasn't for her, I don't know what way my life would have gone. Maybe it sounds pathetic, but she picked me up, put me under her arm and ran with me like I was a football."

"Regrets?"



"Weaning them off their perks has to start someplace."

"Oh no, but at certain moments you can't help but imagine how things would have been different. I didn't come out of the womb wanting to be a tax attorney, you know."

"What would you have done instead?"

"What's past is past. How about now? I've been thinking about moving out here."

"What would you do?"

"Fish. Relax. I think there's some sort of golf course around here somewhere. I'm sure it's no Pebble Beach, but I bet you don't have to call ahead for tee time. I could get a dog. Chase birds in the fall. I'm not joking. I've always thought that had things been different for me, I'd've ended up out here as a young man." He patted the carry-on bag at his side. "I picked up some real estate literature. I'm going to look at it on the plane. If I sold just the house back home I could buy a whole damn ranch out here. Think about it. Land you couldn't ride across in a day."

"What are you talking about? Ride? You don't ride."

"I might learn."

Two years later, I had to come home to Michigan to handle my father's affairs. As I was cleaning out his desk I found a stack of real estate brochures in the top drawer. BIG SKY COUNTRY REAL ESTATE: OWN A PIECE OF THE LAST BEST PLACE. REAL WEST: EXPERIENCE THE TRADITION. There were glossy photos of middle-aged men holding large trout, middle-aged men smiling in ski gear with their pretty second wives, middle-aged men in Stetsons doing things with horses. My father had suffered a heart attack waiting in line at the DMV to get his driver's license renewed. To me, this seemed like a punch line to a joke, not a legitimate way for a person to die. He'd never moved to Montana, of course. The process of disentangling himself from the practice proved insurmountable. The last time I'd talked to him had been on the phone for my 33rd birthday. I'd told him I was thinking of going back to school, or going to Alaska to work at a salmon cannery for the summer to save up enough money to go to New Zealand—or possibly signing up to teach English in Korea.

He'd laughed. "Was I hard on you when you were a boy?"

"Not especially, no."

"I didn't think so either. My dad was hard on me, and it didn't make any damn difference. I think women are the only real source of motivation in the world for men. You know what your problem is?"

"What?"

"I can say this because I recognize my symptoms in you. You and I, we have a capacity for work, dedication, all that. It's just that we suffer from the diffusion of desire."

"I have a lot of things I want to do."

"I understand. And we should do something before you move to Alaska or New Zealand or Korea. We should go to Montana, do a little fishing. Maybe we'll take a day and look at some land."

After the brochures, the rest of the papers in my father's desk were inscrutably

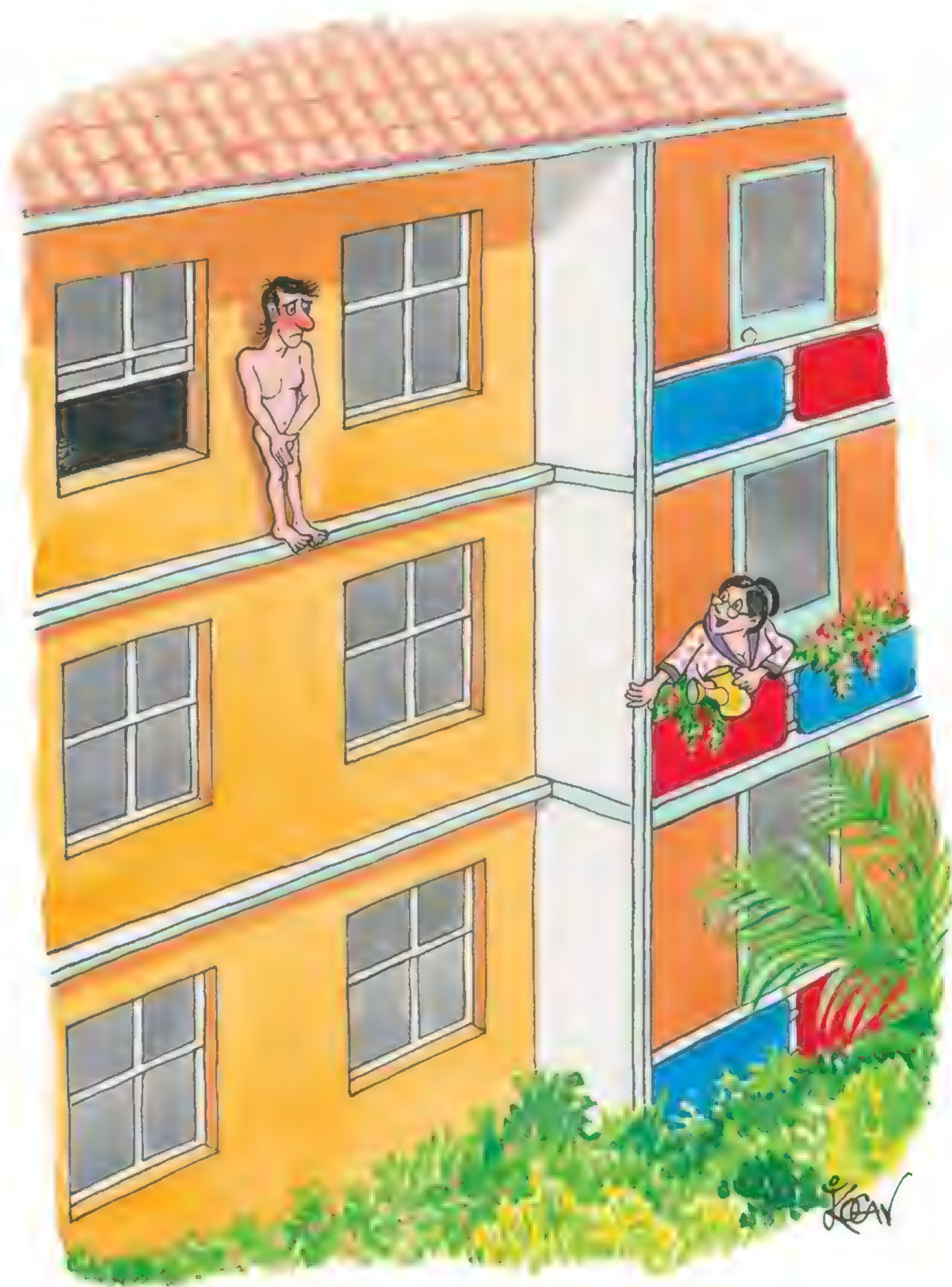
impersonal. He had a whole drawer full of receipts for gas, lunches and travel expenses. He had another drawer full of warranty statements for every appliance in the house dating back to the first microwave he and my mother ever purchased in 1979.

I ended up throwing everything away, brochures and all, and sitting in his chair with my feet on his desk. I thought about how you could tell a house was empty, even a big house like this one, just by how it feels when you're quiet. A house can give a sense of emptiness that moves beyond mere silence. It's a hollowness. You can be more alone in an empty house than anywhere on earth. And now, the house was mine—all the stuff and all the absence, the empty dark matter between the stuff. I realized for the first time what it must have been like for my father here, and this too was something I'd inherited—a newfound

awareness that nothing amplifies the emptiness of a place like ownership.

I got up from the desk and went to the gun cabinet, opening the door on the neatly aligned regiment of English and Italian shotguns. I ran my fingers over the blued barrels, the glossy hardwood stocks. The Purdey was there, the one I'd tried to pawn all those years ago. I took it out and swung it like I was following a low-incoming grouse. I sighted down the barrel at the Tiffany lamp on my father's desk. I broke the gun open and smelled the tang of Hoppe's No. 9 oil. I snapped it shut and the barrel reseated with a satisfying click. I stuffed some shells in my pocket and headed out to the woods behind the house.

From Dog Run Moon: Stories by Callan Wink, out this February from Dial Press.



"Hi there! Has Mr. Dicker come back from his business trip already?" 129



/PLAYBOY



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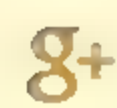
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## RON HOWARD

Continued from page 46

on it?" The studio would have liked Kevin Costner, Harrison Ford or Michael Douglas. By the time *Apollo 13* came out, Tom had won two Academy Awards for *Philadelphia* and *Forrest Gump* and could not have been a cooler, stronger choice.

**PLAYBOY:** In October, audiences will see Hanks return as Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon in *Inferno*, your third movie from the Dan Brown novels that begin with *The Da Vinci Code*. After five times directing Hanks, why does the combination work?

**HOWARD:** He has the great ease and all the elegance of Joe DiMaggio playing center field. Tom, like DiMaggio, makes it look like nothing much, except the play is getting made. But then you start cutting these scenes together and you realize a hell of a lot was going on. The first two Langdon movies were more classically Hitchcockian, but *Inferno* is very psychological, contemporary and even a bit horrific because of the psychological gauntlet the character is going through. What's interesting for me as a director is that in this one, there's a lot more for Tom Hanks, the world-class actor, to roll up his sleeves and dive into.

**PLAYBOY:** In theaters now you have the fact-based high-adventure saga *In the Heart of the Sea*, about an 1800s shipwreck that inspired Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*.

**HOWARD:** I started reading the script and said, "Oh, it's going to be some version of *Moby-Dick*," but I was shocked by how modern and complex the theme of nature versus man was, by what the crew had to endure and by the behavior of the whale. The whaling ship *Essex* was 88 feet long, and the whale was a few feet longer. It rammed and pushed the ship, driving the stern right back into the ocean 30 feet according to one historical account, 200 feet according to another. The real crew members of the *Essex* knew on some level that they were killers, and they wondered whether the whale was their punishment. They also wondered whether the whale was possessed. Our whale is King Kong. When he retaliates, it's like, You fucked with the wrong dude.

**PLAYBOY:** The 20 or so men who survived the whale's retaliation were castaways for months, stranded and starving, and eventually resorted to cannibalism. Did you have any trouble getting your cast to basically starve themselves for art?

**HOWARD:** I was careful in the interview process to be clear about my expectations. I had to crack the whip with a couple of people early on, but Chris Hemsworth, Ben Walker and Cillian Murphy were so committed that if anybody had needed disciplining, these guys would have taken care of it. I'd turned

to Tom Hanks about losing a lot of weight for a movie, which he'd done for *Philadelphia* and *Cast Away*. He told me how miserable he felt having to do it alone, so I should make it a team thing for the guys. He advised us to make sure the dietitians and trainers were there and to make sure there was a good aftercare program for gaining back the lost weight. I'm a bit like *In the Heart of the Sea* as I was about *Apollo 13* and *Cocoon*. It's not an obviously commercial movie. I'm just glad I got to make it, and I hope audiences go see it.

**PLAYBOY:** What are your next projects?

**HOWARD:** Aside from the couple of feature projects I'm circling, I didn't realize what a blast I'd have when Jay Z asked me to work on the *Made in America* documentary, but now I'm doing a Beatles documentary. I just did one of six episodes for the science series *Breakthrough* that National Geographic airs. Brian Grazer and I are doing a six-part series about going to Mars, which I won't direct.

**PLAYBOY:** Does that schedule leave you time for actual hobbies?

**HOWARD:** I don't have hobbies. Cheryl and I bought an apartment in Paris. Instead of going to the beach, we just go to one of the most romantic places in the world and enjoy the city. But my work, that's my hobby.

**PLAYBOY:** Will there be more episodes of *Arrested Development*?

**HOWARD:** Netflix wants it. The fans want it. It's really the fact that our cast has become so successful and busy that it's a matter of [series creator] Mitch Hurwitz rallying the team. He's at work with the writing staff right now, so we hope we can deliver.

**PLAYBOY:** More *Arrested Development* has to mean more of your now-famous narration, right?

**HOWARD:** When Mitch had the idea for a show about his dysfunctional family, I suggested a faux documentary tone a bit like Rob Reiner's *Spinal Tap*. I had the idea that the narration should sound like someone narrating a sociological program about the aboriginal people of the Amazon basin. Just joking around, I did a little bit as an example. When they decided to go with the narration for the pilot episode, I laid in a temp track. I went off and was filming Cate Blanchett on a horse in the snow and Tommy Lee Jones with guns in his hands for *The Missing*. It was freezing. I got this call from Mitch: "The good news is that the show tested really well and they're going to pick it up. The bad news is that one of the highest-testing elements was the narrator." I wound up doing a lot of the first season's narration in the cab of a pickup truck with Cate and Tommy Lee on horseback right outside the door.

**PLAYBOY:** You've come so far from where you started as a kid actor. If there were a Ron Howard figure in a wax museum, how do you think the tour guide would describe you?

**HOWARD:** I'm sure they'll say, "Ron Howard played Opie on *The Andy Griffith Show* and Richie on *Happy Days*." I think Wikipedia might say that right now. I think of myself as a director who used to act. I also think those characters are iconic. I wouldn't want them not to be. I wouldn't change a thing.



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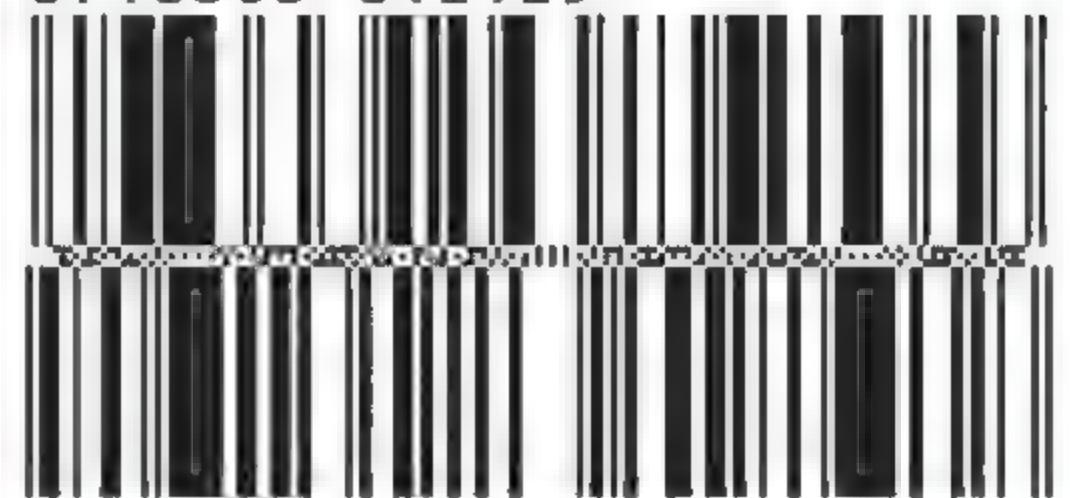
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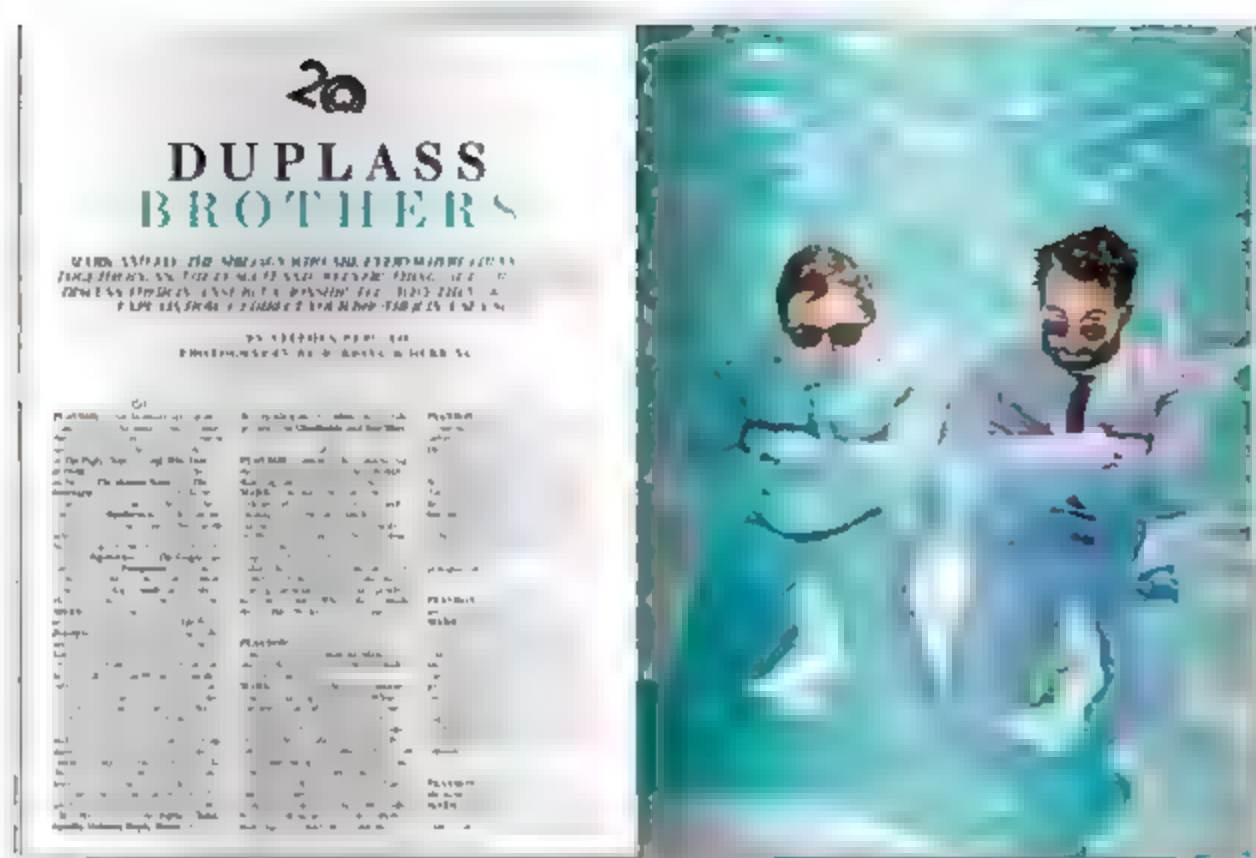
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## DUPLASS BROTHERS

Continued from page 84

try to put musical instruments around the house and not talk about them other than to say, "Hey, see this piano?" That way, maybe you don't get back from them, "Yeah, fuck this piano."

### Q7

PLAYBOY: Post-high school, you both studied filmmaking at the University of Texas at Austin and then ended up in New York. Did you cut loose in the big city?

JAY: In college, it would be eight o'clock on a Friday night and people would ask, "You want to go drinking or whatever?" And we'd just be working with our video camera and our guitars, trying to figure something out. We always had this feeling, as artists, how the fuck can you go out drinking when all the cards are stacked against you? You should be doing something every second, every minute for your art. We had this fear of failing the vision our parents tried

to cultivate in us in a loving, positive way, which was—and still is—that we should be doing something that makes us successful.

### Q8

PLAYBOY: You scraped together enough money in 2005 to make the indie comedy *The Puffy Chair*, which set you on your path. Is it true you secretly wanted to be like the Coen brothers, making noise with your equivalents of *Blood Simple* and *Raising Arizona*?

JAY: When we started out, we were more like, "Oh God, if we could just get one movie into Sundance, then we could go and be lawyers." Literally, *lawyers*. But yeah, when we were in film school in Texas, everyone wanted to be the Coen brothers. Their approach is a forced march of their brilliance. Ours is, How can we stack the cards in our favor so we find something great?

### Q9

PLAYBOY: Once you'd found your groove with funky, improvisational comedies like *Baghead* and *Cyrus*, how soon was it before the big studios tried to rope you in?

MARK: We've been approached many times about directing bigger movies. About two years ago there was a very serious offer on the table for us to do a big superhero franchise. The studio thought it could have the same plot points and trailer moments and we would just inject it with a sense of organic relationships. That's when we realized it would be a lost cause for us. When you do a big movie, the studio owns you for two years. You owe them that. We like to do bedtime with our kids.



"Don't worry, Mrs. Booth, I've been taking this drug for years without serious side effects."

### Q10

PLAYBOY: Co-directing as you do, does it ever get weird when, say, Jay directs a sex scene for *Togetherness* between Mark and his screen wife (played by Melanie Lynskey), both of them half-naked, with spanking, vibrators or clothespins on nipples?

MARK: There's more of that stuff this season, but by the time we're wedded to doing, say, an uncomfortable sex scene, it has been beaten to death because we've spent a lot of time discussing plot, level of verisimilitude, comedy, pathos. I just show up on the set ready to get naked and do things. If anything, Jay should be more aware that there are other naked people in the room. Last season, when Melanie and I had a scene in a hotel room, I wanted Jay to be our main cameraman. At a certain point, he was grabbing my hand, moving it around, saying, "Put your hand back on Melanie's boob." Afterward, Melanie was giggling, "You realize you told your brother to put his hand on my boob?" To us, that was completely normal.

### Q11

PLAYBOY: *The Overnight*, which you produced, is a comedy that dabbles in mate swapping and bisexuality. *Tangerine*, shot on an iPhone, is a kind of screwball comedy about transgender sex workers. When you're working, which of you is likely to pump the brakes and say, "Too much."

JAY: On the *Transparent* set, the bathrooms are mostly gender-neutral. If you're peeing and a woman comes in, it's just the way it is. I can't even tell who's transgender half the time, partially because of their effectiveness and partially because my brain has started to let go of those things. I live in one of the most gender-fluid, evolved—if not the most progressive—scenarios on earth right now. We'd never have a conversation about what's too much.

### Q12

PLAYBOY: *Transparent*, a dark comedy about three self-obsessed adult children and their father, who is transitioning from male to female, is a hot-button TV show, but it's also very funny. Is it tough to not crack up at some of the lines and performances?

JAY: It's the opposite problem. Mark and I are big criers. We cry all the fucking time. I have to stop myself from crying when I work on *Transparent*. The show is at the forefront of a civil rights movement. We'll be setting up a scene and I'll be like, "Oh my God, here it comes. Maybe I shouldn't cry." Mark and I just feel all the things. We're in touch with our emotions. Personally, I enjoy it. I find it cathartic.

### Q13

PLAYBOY: Has a review or tweet ever made you cry?

JAY: I don't know how we got there, but I don't care about that stuff anymore. People on Twitter seem to like what we do. Our friends like it. We would love to win trophies and shit like that, but if Mark and I make each other happy with what we come up with, that's it.



#### Q14

PLAYBOY: Now that you're successful, how do you kick back and enjoy it?

JAY: The hardest thing for us right now is turning it off, man. I'm over 40 and still in this manic state of trying to achieve and not allowing myself to rest. I feel exactly like Mark when he says, "I cannot rest, because I've put everything in danger to do this unusual thing." We're more successful than we ever thought we'd be, but we're still driven by desperation and fear.

#### Q15

PLAYBOY: Have you tried the usual antidotes—meditation, yoga, running, stupid spending, travel, exotic diets?

MARK: Jay is really into meditation and trying to be enlightened and stuff. At the same time, we're just generally a little unsettled in the world. We have a couple of friends who were truly born with the bliss gene. We didn't get that, and we're both jealous of it. But bliss hurts the work. You have to be fucking hungry. You've got to want stuff.

#### Q16

PLAYBOY: In much of your acting, as well as in projects you direct and produce, the vibe given off is that you're relatable and accessible, though somehow, others think of you and your work as funky, Eastside Los Angeles hipster. What range of responses do you get in public?

JAY: We are the kings of bourgeois. Our shit is so bourgeois. It's about having children,

trying to do your job and being happy. We are bougie as fuck, man. I mean, have people seen the sneakers on *Togetherness*? Nothing hip there. Part of what has drawn people to us is that they look at us and say, "These are just two regular, mildly good-looking, semi-intelligent guys from the suburbs." As movie-makers, I think early on we gave off this erroneous vibe of "Just pick up your camera and do your thing, man, and everything will be okay." Lots of people wanted to be like us and work with us, but once we sat with them and they got two-feet deep into what it actually takes, 98 percent of them bailed immediately.

#### Q17

PLAYBOY: You've made movies with Jonah Hill, Jason Segel, Ed Helms and Susan Sarandon. Have any actors bailed on you?

MARK: We want to work with people like Richard Jenkins, Jeff Daniels and Meryl Streep, but we're a little nervous about it. If it works, it would be explosive. But would they surrender to the thing we do without thinking we're idiots? Would they suffer the foolery of not knowing what's going to happen and be able to sit in chaos?

#### Q18

PLAYBOY: When was the last time you found an actor in synch with that thing you do?

MARK: Amanda Peet, whom we work with on *Togetherness*, is so ridiculously intelligent, it's really kind of terrifying. There is an explosive, confident, dangerous core to her character that comes from Amanda Peet

that no one else could give us. She allows herself to laugh, spaz out and then just get quiet and terrifyingly close to either crying or destroying another human being. Melanie Lynskey is quiet, plays the subtleties and really thinks about the character. We like that breadth of humanity. We like that humans are unpredictable and show things you wouldn't expect.

#### Q19

PLAYBOY: Who do you want to be now that you've grown up?

MARK: We've produced probably 25 movies over the past 10 years. We like to inspire. Amy Poehler is a huge hero of mine for the way she's cultivated other people's work with *Difficult People* and *Broad City*. We like being part of raising up a certain type of person, a talent. We joke that we have a Schindler complex of trying to save people from the artistic struggle that we went through.

#### Q20

PLAYBOY: If it all went south tomorrow, what would you do?

JAY: The weird part is that we're getting paid to do all this stuff and no one can take it away from us. We know how to really cheaply make and produce movies that make money even if they stink so that everyone can live and fight another day. That's what we're meant to do.



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## WELCOME TO WAKALIWOOD

*Continued from page 108*

is ready to respect his vision because of his country's anti-gay, child-soldiering crap," says Hofmanis. "That's the fight: to get past politics, race and geography. That's why I'm here."

Isaac Nabwana has always been a part of the place where he grew up. On any given morning, his neighbors pass him sitting in the same cracked plastic chair on his porch, strumming the same metronomic riff on a heat-blached guitar. By the look on his face, the riffs are a kind of stimulant concocted to focus his mind, to excite the brain of an artist. Nabwana's pinched forehead and thousand-yard stare form a visage of radical strain and inner journeys, and he often comes out of his musical trances with fresh pages of script. He describes these journeys to me one night after dinner: the jungles of Vietnam, the history of Ugandan cannibals, the fights of thousands of kung fu warriors and the memory of government commandos running violent errands of war in his backyard 40 years before Wakaliga became Wakaliwood.

Nabwana grew up during a time when Ugandans were shaped as much by Western movies as by the violence sweeping their landscape. In the 1970s, Yoweri Museveni, now president, waged a bloody jungle insurgency against the savage dictator Idi Amin and again against President Milton Obote in the early 1980s. Before it was a slum, Wakaliga was a wooded frontier traversed by platoons of fighters peering through the high grass at the capital city of Kampala. Nabwana herded cattle, corralled ducks and watched government soldiers and Museveni's teenage rebels hunt one another in his family's pasture.

His daydreams belong to that unlikely childhood. He grew up listening to local tales of child sacrifice and juju black magic. One legend claimed that President Museveni could turn himself into a cat to observe his enemies and that he used that power of invisibility to strike from anywhere. Nabwana listened to his older brother rave about Bruce Lee, Bud Spencer (of spaghetti Western fame) and Sylvester Stallone, whose dubbed films circulated in Kampala's video halls. In the 1970s and 1980s, films like *The Wild Geese*, *Predator* and *Kickboxer* created an

exalted canon that inspired parents to name their children after a favorite hero or villain. Nabwana and his brother spent hours knocking each other down, practicing kung fu and searching for the precise combination of kicks that would spell instant death.

During those years, Museveni captured Kampala's outer villages. Desperate people fled and passed through Nabwana's pastures on their way to the city. They were homeless, hungry and running from war. Soon, displaced villagers turned on one another. People stole from one another behind the front lines. In his grandmother's house, Nabwana would lie awake among seven of his brothers and sisters, terrified of the bandits who would arrive at the door in the middle of the night.

"*Fungua mlango!*" they'd shout. "Open the door!"

If the children opened the door, the little money they had for food was taken. If they didn't, gunfire came through the windows. "Even birds sat on the edge of the woodland and did not enter at night," Nabwana says. Those bandits who were caught were publicly stoned to death and immolated in mob-driven acts of justice.

Meanwhile, more and more of Museveni's ragged rebels crept among Nabwana's flocks every day. Most of the fighters were village boys who had never visited a video hall, country bumpkins with nothing special about them—no moves, no attitude, just juju magic for invisibility. Those from Kampala, however, had seen Western films. They knew Western bravado. They shouted and launched rockets like Arnold Schwarzenegger. They messed with the minds of the country boys, firing automatic rifles at railroad steel, hoping the sound would scare the regime into thinking it was being shot at by some kind of secret weapon.

Nabwana's uncle was one of the rebels who lived in Kampala and had seen Bruce Lee's movies. On weekends, he led kung fu-obsessed gangs to discos to start fights and break heads, pursuing the power Bruce Lee unleashed when he faced Chuck Norris in *Return of the Dragon*. His uncle was eventually arrested, Nabwana says, and while the fighters tied up next to him focused on the days of torture ahead, his uncle maintained a crouched kung fu stance for hours, mentally conditioning his quadriceps for an explosive burst of speed. When he saw his chance, he ran for it.

"The discipline he learned by studying Lee's fight scenes paid off," Nabwana says. "The other men were shot." Somewhere in that space and time, Nabwana's stories were born.

Nabwana wrote his first script 10 years ago after enrolling in a six-month course in computer maintenance. One month of classes was enough to teach him how to build computers from scrap parts. He scoured Dumpsters for discarded technology, rigged together a desktop computer and taught himself the ins and outs of Adobe Premiere, After Effects and

other pirated editing software. He borrowed a camera from his neighbor, rallied friends to fill the roles of actors and recruited fighters from Kampala's Country Wing Chinese Kung Fu School to choreograph battle scenes.

The first generation of Wakaliwood's prop rifles and bazookas were actually fashioned from folded banana leaves. But Nabwana's production values got better. He bought emerald cloth at a market to use as a green screen and raided the health clinic for free condoms, which became make-do balloons filled with fake blood.

The next generation of props graduated to wood; bandoliers, for example, were made with 40 or 50 small stakes looped together with thread. The current arsenal is the most advanced. Five or six gun-shaped devices were welded from scrap metal. A camouflage carbine is made of pipe to resemble grenade launchers. Dauda Bisaso, Wakaliwood's lead prop maker, built a mock machine gun from a lawn mower engine that spins six barrels. Bisaso cheekily named the machine Maria; on film, the clunker somehow manages to look as if it has the power of a vengeful god, and its weight brings out the actors' musculature.

For years, Nabwana and Harriet gave his films away for free, handing stacks of burned DVDs to video halls and street vendors who hawked pirated Italian and Lebanese soap operas on blankets by the roadside. On every DVD label Nabwana printed his phone number. "That's how we got attention," says Harriet. "People wanted to see more each time."

One of those people was Hofmanis, who first watched scenes from *Captain Alex* on his friend's cell phone at a bar in the East Village. It was 2011 and he was turning an unwanted engagement ring over and over in his hand, heartbroken. The woman he wanted to marry had just dumped him. He was emotionally emaciated, wondering what might have been, but he didn't lose sight of his true passion: new cinema. Before he was director of programming at the Lake Placid film festival, Hofmanis was a penniless volunteer at Sundance, sleeping in stairwells or behind the piano in the Park City Library. While promoting the Lake Placid festival, he slept on the street. His girlfriend was gone and it hurt, but Hofmanis had enough in the bank for a plane ticket. He was in a bar, watching Ugandan actors shoot one another with make-shift firearms soldered from scrap metal. Something struck him. The knot in his chest opened into a vast, airy expanse of endless possibility.

"I saw it and thought it would be crazier not to go," Hofmanis says. At that moment he felt wholly willing to sacrifice everything material to be close to something new—something different. Less than a month later, he arrived at Nabwana's front door.

At first, Hofmanis was as conspicuous as a sore thumb in the slum. He spent months



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living at a motel called the Boom because it was the only place he could find with a clean room. It happened to also be the local pay-by-the-hour sex motel. "People saw me coming in and out and would give each other this look, like, 'This guy really loves the women here,'" Hofmanis says, chuckling. "Look at that *mzungu*! African *mzungu*!" they'd shout. Natives viewed him as a sex addict who had a fetish for young black Ugandan girls.

Eventually he moved into a tiny space behind Nabwana's house, where he now edits film and promotes Wakaliwood abroad. He assists on sets and stars in films. But as the only *mzungu* residing there, for a long time he was looked on by cast mates and locals with a mix of pity and suspicion. After all, what kind of loser trades New York City for Wakaliga? He heard whispers: Poor Alan; America hated him so he had to come here. He wasn't good enough for his country, or his woman.

He also had to fight the notion that all white people are rich—a stereotype that has caused uneasiness among the cast and crew. "The assumption is Isaac has a *mzungu* friend, so now Isaac has money," Hofmanis says. "These guys have been working for years for free, dreaming of a salary."

For most of the cast members, acting in Nabwana's films is a source of pride, but they still need to eat. Bukenya Charles, Wakaliwood's martial arts expert, hustles purses and blouses at a tiny shop within the maze of the Owino market. Actor Ronald Buriyahika drives a *boda-boda* seven days a week. Apollo Creed, a Wakaliwood actor named after Rocky Balboa's first nemesis, unloads trucks of fruits and vegetables.

Hofmanis learned to adapt to Kampala's culture over the years, but it was Jesus who finally earned him acceptance in the predominantly Christian slum. Nabwana asked Hofmanis, as the rare white man, to play the Lord in a music video. The video became so popular that people began to recognize him on buses and on the streets. Passersby gleefully shouted, "Hey, Jesus!"

Four years later, the Catholic *mzungu* is one of them, more or less. He enjoys a local dish called the Rolex—scrambled eggs and tomato rolled into chapatis, or fried wheat pancakes—that's surely clogging his gut. He's learned to shit in plastic bags, bathe in buckets and ignore the parasites. The slum has learned from him too. When Hofmanis cut his hand during a stunt for a film called *Bad Black*, dozens of locals gathered to see the color of his blood. "They thought white people had blue blood," Hofmanis says. "They were amazed we bled the same way."

But Hofmanis didn't anticipate being an intercultural liaison when he left lower Manhattan, and the role drains him more and more every day. He has lost 50 pounds since relocating, and his hygiene has gone to shit. He has dirty nails, long hair and the beard of a traveler. "Money is a real source of tension right now. Wakaliwood has always been a community thing, but if money and success start coming in, it might tear these people apart," he says. Pressure builds in the Wakaliga slum as actors and crew members realize outsiders are watching their movies. And every foreign journalist who sidles up to them spewing nasally, choppy Luganda, myself included, makes the big money seem that much closer.

Hofmanis returns to the United States for promotional tours once or twice a year. When he does, he faces an entirely different set of obstacles—the first-world kind. The festival circuit is a world of manners and Anglo-Saxon perceptions. It's not, by any stretch, Wakaliwood, where street shops fall apart when actors accidentally tumble through them and \$200 pays for weeks of shooting, screenwriting, car chasing, motorcycle jumping and kung fu battling.

Some of the industry insiders Hofmanis talked to were insulted he was peddling a product from a country intolerant of gays. Others told him a real film from Uganda would take a stance against poverty and child soldiers. The kindest critique suggested Nabwana's movies were anthropological artifacts. Hofmanis should seek out ethnographic film festivals or something for African art, they said.

As Wakaliwood's ambassador, Hofmanis quickly learned that millions of online views and in-boxes full of fan mail don't translate into studio backing or even admittance to film festivals. Sundance, South by Southwest and the Tokyo International Film Festival all snubbed Nabwana, as did the Festival de Cine Pobre, which celebrates the lowest-budget self-funded films. How did this first-world wall come to be? How could the same footage that inspired Hofmanis to cross the globe inspire others to shame him for glorifying violence in Africa? Hofmanis did his best to remember his crisp, recurring dreams of pushing Wakaliwood into the limelight. The golden age has yet to come, he believed. Fortune favors the bold, doesn't it?



In June, the first-world wall finally cracked. Hofmanis jumped from a seat in his cement bunker and reread the headline beaming from his small computer screen: GENRE FILM FESTIVAL WILL INCLUDE GILLES PAQUET-BRENNER'S "DARK PLACE" AND CELEBRATE UGANDA'S WAKALIWOOD FILMS. Indiewire, a leading news source for filmmakers and film lovers alike, was touting a Wakaliwood production and Charlize Theron's latest movie side by side as main attractions at Montreal's Fantasia International Film Festival, the largest genre-film festival on earth.

Hofmanis rustled through his stash of American treasures—Tabasco sauce, Hershey's syrup, instant coffee—and located a Twix bar he'd been saving for a moment like this. "My fuck-you moment," as he describes it. It was a "fuck you" to the woman who didn't want to marry him, to the New York film distributor who'd compared *Captain Alex* to a viral cat video, to a dozen festival directors who wouldn't touch Nabwana in 2011 or 2012. It was a "fuck you" to anyone who'd doubted Hofmanis's pilgrimage to the slums of Kampala against a tidal wave of migrants going the other way, who'd doubted the veracity of his vision of a burgeoning cinema community.



It was a “fuck you” to his father, who had never supported him.

A lean grin emerged from beneath his overgrown beard and mop of salt-and-pepper hair. His hands and head belonged to a manic violinist, but his mind was mild and genuine. “Things are about to happen,” he told himself.

Indeed, change was in the air. Screenings of *Captain Alex* packed venues in Hong Kong and Stockholm. American celebrities were climbing onboard. In June, Jack White held a private screening of *Captain Alex* in his Nashville studio. Actor Orlando Jones e-mailed Hofmanis, angling for a lead role.

The cast saw it all on a tablet their Kickstarter campaign had bought. Kickstarter also began to pay for meals on production days and for a stack of blue polos advertising their company: RAMON FILM PRODUCTIONS. It paid Bisaso enough to create a life-size helicopter from scrap metal, commissioned to wreak green-screen havoc in an upcoming film called *Ugandan Expendables*. (Guess which American film it’s based on.)

Officials from Museveni’s government, proud of the international attention, put a prop warship on display in Kampala’s center. One of Idi Amin’s many sons stared at it from the crowd, growing nostalgic. He pointed to where the dictator would have sat in the helicopter and to where he himself sat when father and son flew around together, surveying villages from above with a team of finely trained riflemen.

Still, tension over money roils beneath the surface of every big success, Hofmanis says. New whispers were exchanged on set: Wakaliwood pulled tears from Idi Amin’s son, but it can’t pay its own sons and daughters? The community is starving for tangible success.

Nabwana calls “Cut!” one last time and Hofmanis crawls out of his carcass costume. This scene nearly completes production on *Eaten Alive in Uganda*, one chapter of what will become the country’s first action-film trilogy. All of Nabwana’s movies comment on the gritty bits of Ugandan reality, and *Eaten Alive* is no different. It’s based on a true cannibalism story that came out of Uganda’s Rakai region in 2014. Cannibalism is still a big thing in the southern provinces along Tanzania’s border, but *Law & Order*-esque headline exploitation had never been used in Ugandan film—until now. If people are talking about it, Nabwana starts writing. He looks at it as a way to save on advertising.

In Nabwana’s constantly evolving script for *Eaten Alive in Uganda*, Hofmanis plays a white man mistaken for Chuck Norris while vacationing in the Ugandan countryside with his Ugandan wife and children. In the true story, a man stayed overnight in a small village in the Rakai province with his pregnant wife and child. They attended a funeral that ended late and missed the last bus back

home. Stranded, they found a welcoming stranger to stay with. After midnight, the host led the wife and child outside, where they were attacked by machete-wielding cannibals. Using his suitcase to deflect machete swipes, the man alone lived to tell the story.

In the movie, Hofmanis’s *mzungu* character goes sightseeing under the stars. He stumbles upon a quaint fire-lit tribal celebration that is actually a coming-of-age ritual for child cannibals. When the *mzungu*, presumed to be Chuck Norris, pops a flash to take a picture, the jungle savagery begins.

Nabwana never believed Bruce Lee could have defeated Chuck Norris in *Return of the Dragon*, which is why he included the mistaken-identity plot point. For another scene, Hofmanis will be forced into a kung fu death match with actor Bruce U, Wakaliwood’s version of Bruce Lee. Sadly, Hofmanis doesn’t know kung fu, so Nabwana has to paint another actor’s face white. That man, Kizza Manisuri Ssejjemba, is known to fans as Triangle Style for the triangles shaved into his Afro. Even with white paint smeared over his face, Ssejjemba is still pretty black.

It’s unclear how Hofmanis will sell whiteface and African child cannibals to the culturally conscious guardians at Cannes, but Nabwana isn’t worried about any of that. His feet are firmly planted on his side of the first-world wall. He considers himself a director, but foremost, he is a patriot. Hollywood action films once convinced the world that a single United States Army soldier could snap the necks of an entire battalion. Why can’t Ugandan films have the same reputation? Why can’t his heroes inspire international audiences like Sylvester Stallone and Chuck Norris did? Nabwana thinks Uganda can have it. He wants Uganda to have it.

Meanwhile, Hofmanis, the 46-year-old searcher, expat and zealot for new cinema, continues to map Wakaliwood’s future glory in the concrete room he shares with rats and red ants. He tells me the last time he was in New York, he had to sneak into his parents’ house after his father went to sleep and run out before he woke up in the morning. Hofmanis’s father has pounded home his disappointment with years of cold silence. He says his dad once handed him a scrapbook of clippings of luxury car ads and brochures for exotic vacations.

“He wanted me to know what he could have had if he didn’t have kids,” Hofmanis says, grinning again. “Not a single African slum brochure in there.”

But he ignores all that. He’s grinning because all that is behind him. His baggy, dilated eyes turn far away from his Wakali cell and toward his glorious dream: to the south of France, the posh epicenter of world cinema that overflows with manicured women, bubbly champagne, rare steaks, A-list stars, red carpets and the eyes of the world.



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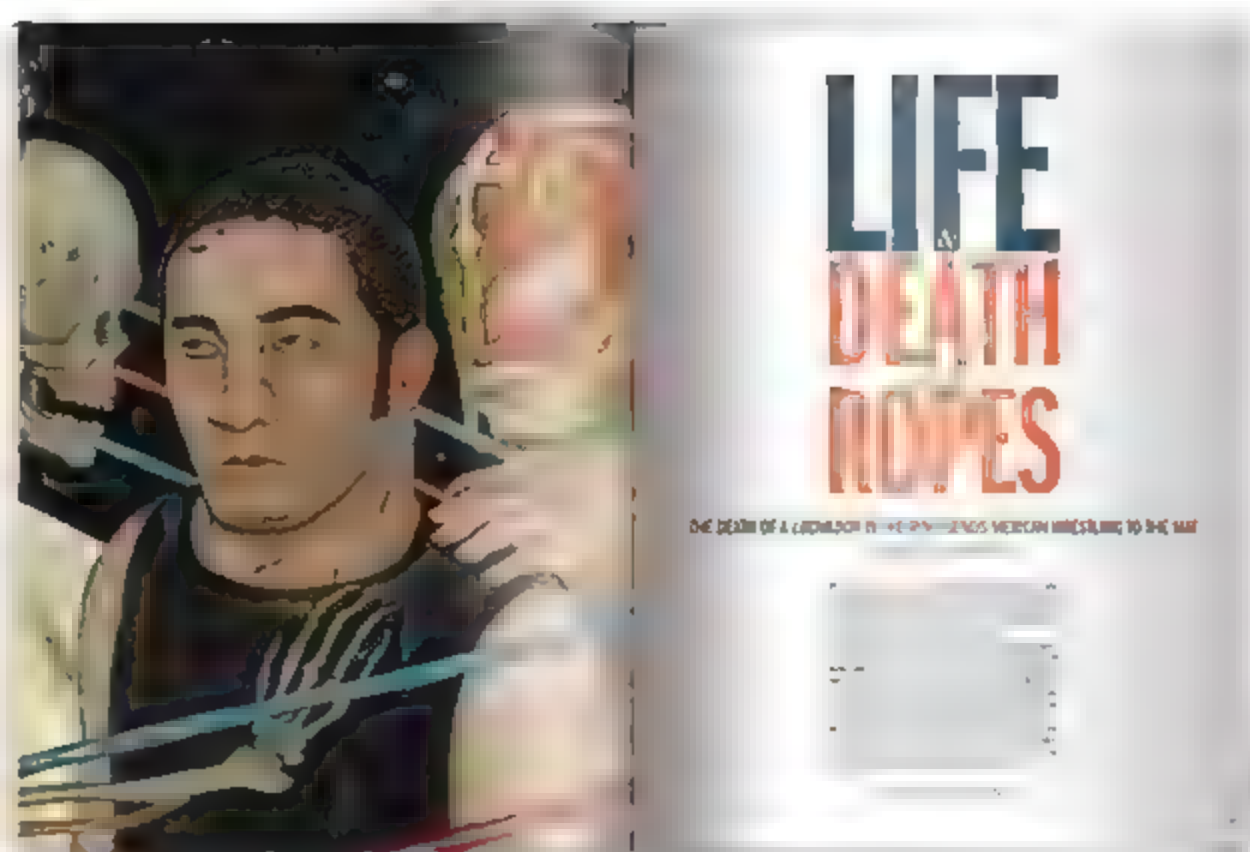
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## LIFE & DEATH ON THE ROPES

*Continued from page 52*

had yet to reveal that wrestling—and all the violence and rivalries within it—is scripted. It wasn't until Konnan visited the Aguayo home and played with the family dog, a chow chow named Bola, that Perrito felt safe around him.

Konnan and Aguayo Sr. were tag-team partners when Perrito made his professional wrestling debut in June 1995 at the age of 15, a rarity even in Mexico. But in front of 19,500 fans at the Río Nilo Coliseum in Tonalá, Jalisco, Aguayo lived up to the high expectations that came with being his father's son. "The younger Aguayo is such a natural in the ring," gushed *Wrestling Observer Newsletter*, which awarded three and a quarter stars to Aguayo's match with Juventud Guerrera. Afterward Konnan told Aguayo Sr. he would look after his son for him once he retired.

"Those words haunt me sometimes," Konnan says today.

Aguayo Sr. was fearful and reluctant to allow his son to follow in his footsteps. He knew the dangers of the business, the wounds and broken bones that could be inflicted inside the ring. A botched piledriver had almost left him paralyzed. Today, Aguayo Sr.'s forehead is mutilated, a calloused mass of scars. This is the result of decades of blading, a long-standing wrestling routine of using a small blade to cause intentional bleeding during a match. The Mexican media have speculated that Aguayo Sr. suffers from Alzheimer's disease. His current condition and his son's fate are reminders that even though wrestling is scripted, it's not exactly fake.

Perrito began training young. Playtime was forward rolls and running the ropes after his father's matches. By the age of eight he was learning tae kwon do, as well as Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling. His passion was evident. Eventually, his father relented.

With his debut match a success, Hijo del Perro Aguayo was brought along slowly in AAA, often wrestling in tag matches with his dad. Father and son looked similar, and early on they wore matching ring gear. As time passed and Aguayo Sr. crept into retirement, Perrito, unlike many other "Juniors" and "Hijo dels" in wrestling, created his own persona and legacy.

Like his father, Hijo del Perro Aguayo was a brawler who would spill his own blood in the ring to heighten drama; "red equals green" was Senior's motto. But he was a

more versatile performer than his father. He could chain wrestle on the mat or dive from the top rope. He was very athletic, and he was polished on the microphone. His greatest attribute, though, was his charisma, especially when working as a heel.

"I've seen a lot of good wrestlers, but not all of them have that charisma—in Spanish we call it an angel, as in 'the grace of an angel,' and that's what Perro had," Peña says through an interpreter. "He always took over. He was that bad guy who, when he came onto the scene, he just took control of the audience."

Aguayo was a true *rudo*. He knew how to get heat, how to conjure villainous energy. He was a throwback to a time when bad guys could whip fans into a frenzy. No matter the town, no matter the opponent, he identified every trigger point for the crowd. He registered emotions well with his face. His timing was perfect—he recognized how and when to suppress a babyface (a good guy or hero) trying to mount a teased comeback. A low blow was one of his finishing moves.

Aguayo was a different person outside the ring. He was humble and well-spoken. Whereas his character was a blood-licking thug, Perro was *fresa*—Mexican slang for "preppy." He wore suits. He lived near his parents in Tala, Jalisco, a town 30 minutes west of Guadalajara. And though he was fiercely private, it's known he was divorced.

He got his big break after leaving AAA in 2003 for CMLL, the world's oldest running wrestling promotion, where he formed a heel group called Perros del Mal (Dogs of Evil). In the tradition of such antiheroes as the N.W.O. and D-Generation X, Perros made it cool to be bad and became the hottest act in the company. (Their catchphrase was "God forgives; the Dogs...no!") A 2007 turn on the highly rated reality-show competition *Los 5 Magníficos* heightened Aguayo's popularity. Later in his career he was a regular on the telenovela *Qué Pobre Tan Ricos*.

Business was booming. Aguayo often wrestled 10 times a week and regularly headlined Friday-night shows at Arena México. *Wrestling Observer* called it "as far as a singular arena...one of the greatest attendance runs in pro wrestling history." And Aguayo capitalized on his popularity. He was a shrewd businessman who exploited each opportunity. After forming Perros del Mal, he hired professional artists to design a logo, which he test-marketed before unveiling to the public. The black shirt with red slashes over white lettering became the first wrestling T-shirt to go mainstream in Mexico. He understood marketing redundancy, wearing the T-shirt everywhere—in the ring, in photo shoots, even on *Los 5 Magníficos*. He created a brand and even opened a brick-and-mortar store in La Roma, a trendy neighborhood in Mexico City. Between the clothing line and his construction company, Aguayo made a fortune. "He didn't have to wrestle, I'll put it that way," Konnan says. "He wrestled because he loved it."

Predictably, WWE, the billion-dollar promotion headed by Vince McMahon, approached Aguayo. He declined an audition. "Perro had charisma, definitely had





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the ability, and I think he could have gotten over [with the crowd]," says former WWE writer Court Bauer, now a consultant for AAA. "The language barrier was the only issue he would have faced."

Aguayo saw the foreign market as challenging. Another concern was that because of licensing rights, WWE likely wouldn't bill him as Hijo del Perro Aguayo. He was proud of his name and had worked too hard building his brand to abandon it. Instead, he gambled: He left CMLL in 2008 to bankroll his own independent promotion, Producciones Perros del Mal. The market, however, wasn't kind to start-ups. The recession had ravaged the world economy, and the promotion struggled to land sponsors and a television deal. So in June 2010, Aguayo, along with Perros del Mal, invaded AAA, where he wrestled until his death.

Aguayo had an agreement with AAA that permitted him to make sporadic appearances for other promotions. Now 20 years into his career, he didn't wrestle as often, but the March 20 show in Tijuana was a homecoming for Rey Mysterio, the former WWE superstar.

Aguayo started the day with a workout in the hotel gym before meeting the promoter of the event, CRASH owner Ignacio Delgado, for lunch at the Golden Palace, Aguayo's favorite Chinese restaurant in Tijuana. Once Aguayo's cousin Kahn del Mal, a fellow wrestler, returned from a shopping trip across the border, they left for the sold-out show.

Backstage, the mood at Auditorio Municipal was calm. As is tradition in *lucha libre*, the younger performers stopped by Aguayo's locker room to shake the veteran's hand. He then went over the match with his tag-team partner, Manik, along with Mysterio and his partner, Xtreme Tiger. Aguayo gave Manik a Perros del Mal T-shirt before the masked wrestler departed. It was almost bell time. On their way to the tunnel entrance, Aguayo, Manik, Konnan and Kahn saw doctors treating a wrestler for a broken collarbone.

Aguayo employed his trademark heel tactics to start the match—he swung a chair, threatened to tear off Mysterio's mask and then climbed the ropes, arms outstretched, to bask in the jeers. In the final sequence, the only unplanned bit was when Aguayo exited the ring following the head scissors—he was

supposed to fall into the middle rope for the 619 spot. When he reentered, Mysterio's dropkick put him in the correct position, but Aguayo's body went limp after hitting the ropes. Video shows him bleeding from his eye at this point. Still, the match continued for 70 seconds with Aguayo languishing on the canvas. It took another 80 seconds for emergency personnel to arrive.

With other injured wrestlers already occupying all the gurneys, a decision was made to place Aguayo on a piece of plywood. He was carried to the back, lifted onto a stretcher and then, six minutes after the injury occurred, loaded into an ambulance for the quick ride—two blocks west—to the hospital. As EMTs attended to Aguayo, Kahn and Konnan removed the tape from his fingers and wrists and unlaced his boots—anything to stimulate a reaction. Kahn noticed Aguayo's chest wasn't moving. He squeezed his hand. There was no response. Doctors worked on Aguayo for 90 minutes at the hospital before pronouncing him dead at 1:30 A.M.

Could Aguayo's life have been saved? With two ambulances and a doctor present, CRASH's medical provisions were higher than the industry standard for independent wrestling shows. And though the optics were appalling—the match continuing; the makeshift plywood stretcher—Aguayo's longtime family doctor has said that no medical treatment could have kept him alive. Aguayo fractured his C1, C2 and C3 vertebrae; a C2 fracture is called a "hangman's fracture."

Everyone has a theory about which move—the kick in the corner, the bump on the ring apron, the dropkick, hitting the ropes—caused the injury, but it couldn't be determined. We will never know. Kahn says Aguayo had no preexisting neck or spinal injury and that in fact his wrestling license was renewed less than a month before his death. In his career Aguayo had suffered a broken leg and a knee injury, and it was reported he had a cancerous tumor removed from his stomach in 2011. Kahn, the family spokesman, believes a blow to the chest earlier in the match felled his beloved cousin. "I was ringside. From that point forward, I noticed there was something odd about him. His legs weren't sturdy. His vision looked different," he says through an interpreter. Kahn then switches to halting English. "You know your brother. You

know him. You know everything. You know when something is wrong."

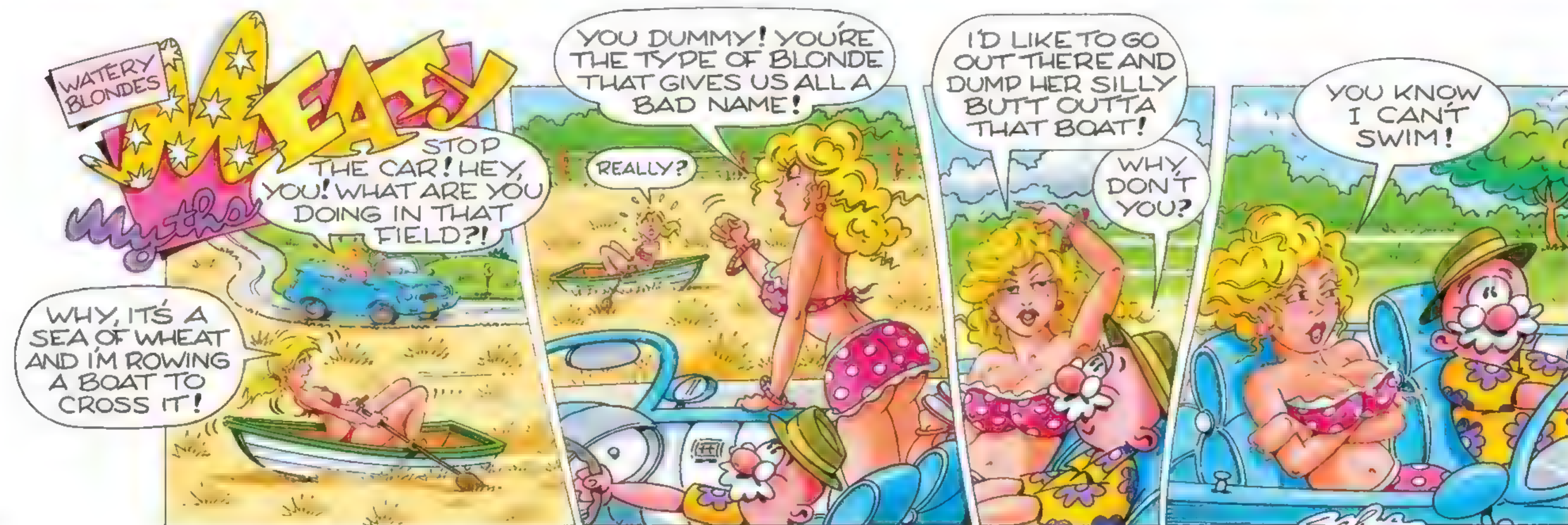
"Is this going to be on camera?" Rey Mysterio asks. "No? Okay, then we can take the mask off." Mysterio, 40, unzips the red-and-blue mask to reveal a still boyish face. He lounges on a couch in the locker room of the Arena Ciudad de México on the night before Triplemanía, wearing a Cassius Clay T-shirt, dark denim and construction boots. At five-two, he can barely scrape the floor with his feet.

Having departed AAA in 1995 for the Philadelphia-based promotion ECW, then ultimately thriving in WCW and WWE, Mysterio missed Hijo del Perro's rise. And so he was thrilled that after leaving WWE in February 2015 his first matches in Mexico were with Aguayo. Mysterio and Aguayo changed in the same locker room that night in Tijuana and spoke about life, family and their recent match in Guadalajara. "I told him, 'You blew my mind. You are on another level,'" Mysterio says. "That was the last thing I told him before we went out to the ring."

Mysterio has seen the footage from Tijuana. "I had doubt in my mind if I had done something—that I could have caused it," he says. "I probably went over it a hundred times trying to find what I could have done different, if anything. Apparently not." He first realized Aguayo was injured while in midair, attempting the 619. When he swung around and saw Aguayo on the ropes, he thought Aguayo had suffered a concussion or been knocked out. Breaking character, he nudged Aguayo. When there was no response, Mysterio and Manik called an end to the match as quickly as possible. Mysterio spent the night at the hospital with Konnan and Kahn.

With more than 25 years in the business, Mysterio has seen too many wrestlers—too many friends, including Eddie Guerrero and Edward "Umaga" Fatu—die young. This hurt even more, Mysterio says, because it happened in the ring. "It has affected me to this day. My preparation for matches, sometimes I feel blocked. Sometimes I feel like I shouldn't be doing this. Sometimes I think I should throw in the towel," he says, his raspy voice breaking up. "Being around my wife and kids, I think that's my biggest fear. For my kids not to have a father—that really scares me."

Mysterio's name was the most-searched





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item on the internet on the morning after Aguayo's death. He received death threats on Twitter. Adding to his woes, the deputy prosecutor of Baja California announced he would open an investigation into Aguayo's death, meaning Mysterio could face manslaughter charges. Mysterio tells me the prosecutor's office hasn't contacted him; the president of the Tijuana Boxing and Wrestling Commission (yes, such a position exists) has said no one is to blame for the incident but also stated that wrestling should be regulated much like boxing is. A senator from Baja California later proposed a bill that would establish a protocol for medical attention at wrestling events.

There have been at least 15 documented incidents of wrestlers dying in the ring, the majority from a heart attack or a brutal neck bump. Aguayo, however, died following a series of routine moves, leaving many on the AAA roster shaken. "When I saw how it happened, it was like, Oh God, that can happen to me. It made me feel so vulnerable," says El Hijo del Fantasma. He's a 31-year-old graduate of Universidad Anáhuac with a degree in international relations who speaks perfect English and plans to one day enter politics. How does he, a thoughtful guy, block out the risks in his profession? "By wrestling, by doing more *lucha*," he says. "We have this tradition that if someone passes, the way we honor them is by

dedicating everything you do to them. The night after Perro died, we were devastated, but we did a great show for him."

At the time of his death, Aguayo was slated to star in the main event of August's Triplemanía XXIII, a hair vs. mask match against either Myzteziz or Rey Mysterio. Instead, those two masked wrestlers clashed in what was billed as a dream match. But illogical story lines, sloppy action throughout the card and technical problems that caused audio issues for the pay-per-view audience turned Triplemanía into a bust—"Pretty much a disaster," wrote 411mania.com in one of many dreadful reviews.

After the show, Dorian Roldan, AAA's executive vice president of business development, sat in the control room, looking exhausted. As the son of Marisela Peña, Roldan plays a familiar character on-screen: the sniveling, privileged scion. Behind the scenes, though, he's part of a team responsible for much of AAA's recent growth. When his uncle Antonio Peña passed away in 2006, Roldan says, AAA had two sources of income: gate receipts and two sponsors (Corona and Comex). Roldan and his mother expanded the company, focusing on marketing (*Mission: Impossible—Rogue Nation* sponsored Triplemanía), licensing products such as sticker albums and video

games, hiring a PR agency and spending big to bring home former WWE stars. AAA, which now stages 800 shows a year worldwide, is also nearing a potential windfall with the loosening of the Televisa and TV Azteca duopoly in Mexican broadcasting. At the moment AAA does not receive compensation for its television rights from Televisa. That will soon change with more competition.

Roldan also has one eye on the U.S. ("We really hope Donald Trump doesn't become the next president," he says.) Triplemanía XXIII was the first AAA pay-per-view event to air stateside since 1994, and the company is a majority stakeholder in *Lucha Underground*, an acclaimed wrestling program produced by Mark Burnett (*Survivor* and, ironically enough, *The Apprentice*) on the El Rey Network. "One of the things America understands really well is superheroes," Roldan says. "And wrestlers are like the Mexican superheroes." But he is now without his greatest supervillain—and also trying to recover from the stunning October departures of Myzteziz to CMLL and Alberto El Patrón to WWE. "The wrestling business is complex—negotiations, new players are changing every day. Of course, we are closing new deals with really important talent," Roldan says. "I am really confident that we are still the most powerful company in Latin America and really soon AAA will have two big new stars on our roster."

The show-must-go-on credo is pervasive in professional wrestling. Hours after Aguayo's death, Konnan traveled to Los Angeles for a *Lucha Underground* taping, the first of many tributes to Aguayo. He says Aguayo would likely have appeared on the show in 2016, exposing the American audience to his talents. He tries not to consider hypotheticals, though. He just knows that his friend is gone. "It's very hard, bro. I cried. I dealt with it. I thought about leaving the business. But at the end of the day you can't let it consume you—that's the best way you can explain it," he says. "I understand at this juncture in my life that tragedies are a part of life and it's just how you handle them. Everything isn't going to be good, and you have to be prepared for times like this. This isn't the first time that's happened to me. It probably won't be the last."

Rey Mysterio is also attempting to move forward. On the Thursday before Triplemanía he had a heart-to-heart talk with Angie, his wife of nearly 20 years and the mother of his 18-year-old son, Dominic, and 14-year-old daughter, Aalyah. He told her he was nervous about the big event. He had doubts. He doubted whether he should still be wrestling. He thought of his uncle, who spent 30 years in the ring and is now in a wheelchair. He thought of his friend WWE superstar Tyson Kidd, out of action and lucky to be alive after suffering a horrific neck injury in June. He thought of Perro.

"I ask myself, Do I really need to be out here still grinding it out?" Mysterio says. "But those emotions go away as soon as I make eye contact with the fans. It's magical, and then all the fear is gone." And so he heads to the ring again.



"You're not listening to a word I say!"





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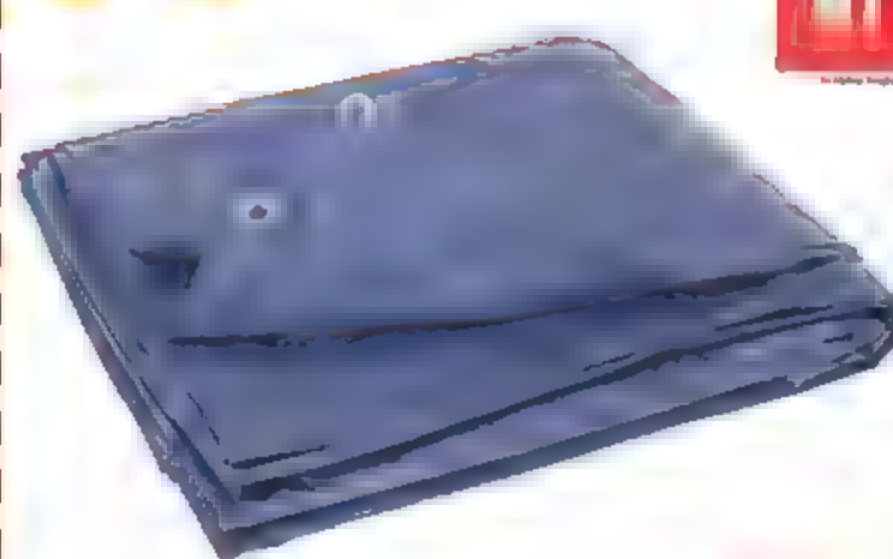
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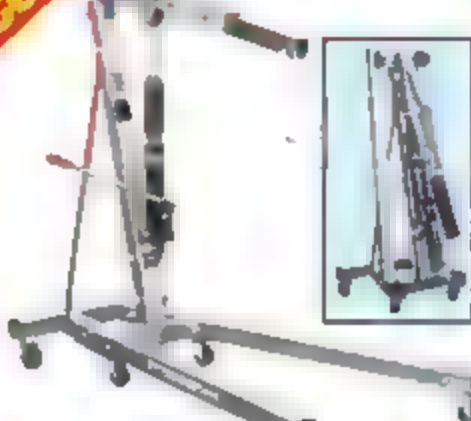
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BRIAN STAUFFER

## A MORAL MAJORITY

*With shifting attitudes among soul-searching Republicans, a new day in the crusade against the death penalty may be dawning*



On April 29, 2014, 15 years after Clayton Lockett shot 19-year-old Stephanie Neiman and buried her alive in a shallow grave, the unrepentant killer's own life reached its end, as ordered by the state of Oklahoma. But Lockett's execution, far from the sanitized, clinical image of death we associate with lethal injection, was a botched, bloody mess.

At 6:33 P.M., 10 minutes after the first of three drugs was administered, Lockett

lost consciousness. The procedure quickly took a turn for the horrifying. Testimony revealed that Lockett experienced vein failure at the site of injection and that the drugs meant to kill him were only partially absorbed, inducing a state of torturous, half-conscious pain until he finally died at 7:06 P.M.

For those 33 minutes, witnesses attest, Lockett repeatedly raised his head and shoulders from the gurney, jerking and moaning as the drugs slowly entered his body tissue. The supervising doctor pricked him 16 times with a needle in an effort to correct the mistake, slicing an artery in his groin, from which blood squirted. "It was like a horror movie," one witness told *The Guardian*.



"He kept trying to talk."

Death penalty opponents such as Colby Coash point to executions like Lockett's as ample reason to abolish the practice, but not because of its cruelty. Coash, a pro-life conservative Nebraska state senator, argues that the death penalty is a quintessential big government program, inefficient and antithetical to conservative values.

Coash won his first election eight years ago by just 79 votes, promising in his campaign to be a good steward of the state's resources. Last May a death penalty repeal bill—sponsored by Ernie Chambers, an independent state senator who has pushed similar legislation in every

session he's served in since 1976—finally passed. It was a feat that would have been impossible without Coash's efforts to rally his conservative peers

and convince seven freshman Republicans of the penalty's inherently anticonservative nature. Nebraska became the seventh state to outlaw the death penalty since 2007 and the first conservative state to do so in 40 years. (The repeal

is now on hold, after a signature campaign forced the bill to a statewide vote to be held this November.)

Their victory may reflect a larger shift in attitudes surrounding execution. Although a majority of Americans continue to support capital punishment, that support is at its lowest in 40 years, and a majority also favor nonlethal options such as life imprisonment when offered the choice. A Pew poll found a 10 percent decrease in support among conservatives over the past two decades, with half the decline taking place in the past year.

Liberals have long argued against the death penalty by citing statistics that show it has failed to reduce the homi-

***"This is the same government we don't trust to deliver the mail or roll out a health care website."***

cide rate and that it places the U.S. in the unsavory company of such countries as Iran, Yemen and North Korea. Such logic holds little sway with law-and-order conservatives, who are more likely to respond to arguments that play to deeply held conservative ideals—namely, the economics: A life sentence is tens of millions of dollars cheaper than an execution. The difference begins at trial, where death penalty cases can cost up to 10 times those seeking life imprisonment. Even housing a death-row inmate is exorbitant; in California it costs an additional \$90,000 each year.

In that state, more condemned inmates die of old age and suicide than from execution. And before last May, Nebraska had executed just three people in the past 40 years, though not for lack of trying. In 2008, Nebraska's Supreme Court ruled that death by electric chair constituted cruel and unusual punishment. Despite



a switch to lethal injection the following year, efforts by states nationwide to execute inmates failed for the same reason: Obtaining the requisite drugs had become a nightmare thanks to a 2011 EU embargo on exporting and a 2013 FDA ban on importing sodium thiopental, an obsolete anesthetic required for the most effective execution cocktail. Alternate cocktails produce gruesome, protracted deaths similar to that suffered by Lockett.

The long appeals process in death penalty cases—15.5

***“If the state gives a sentence it cannot carry out, how is that justice for the families?”***

years on average between conviction and execution, according to the U.S. Department of Justice—is also grueling to those closest to victims. “If the state gives a sentence it cannot carry out, how is that justice for the families?” asks Coash. Dozens of victims’ families lobbied alongside him for repeal, emphasizing that instead of healing their pain, the death penalty exacerbates it by dragging them through a lengthy, traumatizing routine that rarely ends as promised.

These arguments and more have propelled conservatives nationwide to take up campaigns for repeal. In October, a Montana judge blocked all lethal injections in the state. Last year, Republicans sponsored repeal bills in Missouri, Kansas, South Dakota, Kentucky and Wyoming. A growing number of right-wing voices have joined the



► Coash takes “pro-life” and “small government” literally

opposition chorus, including Jay Sekulow, Ramesh Pon-nuru, Ron Paul, Bill O’Reilly and Oliver North. And Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty, a network of right-leaning legislators and activists, has been campaigning since 2013 on a platform that emphasizes capital punishment’s cost, incessant delays and government ineptitude. While CCADP focuses on repealing the death penalty state by state, it is now a staple at the Conservative Political Action Conference, the annual gathering of conservative activists in Washington, D.C. that attracts big-name Republicans from around the country.

Nonetheless, 77 percent of conservatives still support capital punishment; some red states have even doubled down on their support. The difficulty of obtaining sodium thiopental prompted legislators in Arkansas and Utah to propose death by firing squad instead (a common, if hyperbolic, threat). Yet death penalty critic Marc Hyden, advocacy coordinator for the CCADP, is not discouraged. After mishandled executions like Lockett’s, he believes the institution will collapse under the weight of its own inefficiency. After all, he says, “this is the same government we don’t trust to deliver the mail or roll out a health care web-site.” He has a fair point. ■



## GENDER POLITICS

*To survive, libertarianism must become more than a free-market frat house*

BRIAN STAUFFER



The stadium was a sausage fest. This wouldn’t have been notable on any other Sunday at the Tampa Sun Dome, where the University of Southern Florida Bulls play. Trouble was, this wasn’t a basketball game but a fete for the 77-year-old standard

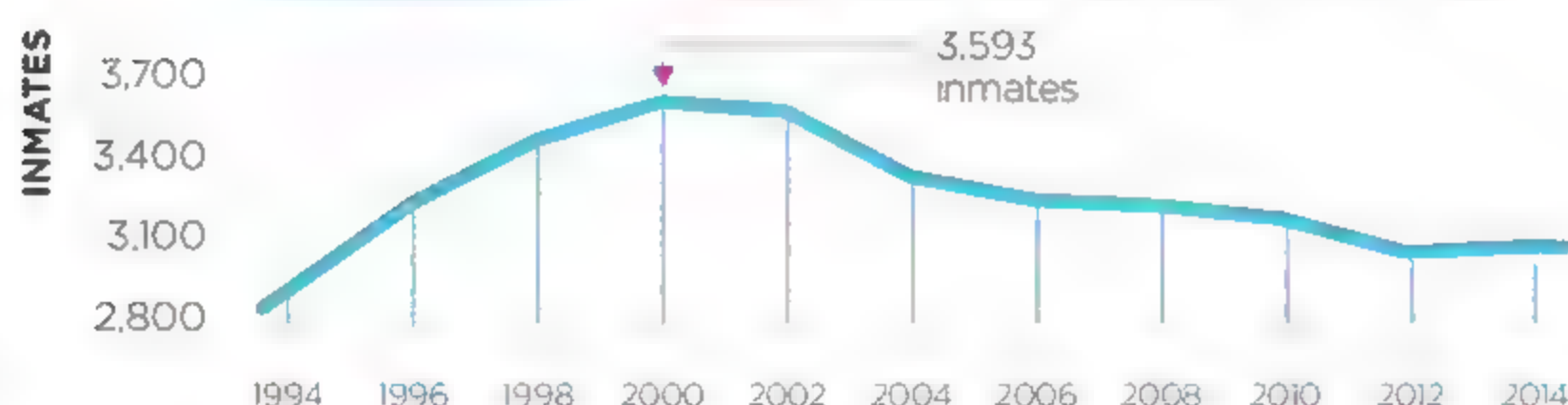
bearer of a long-struggling political movement: Ron Paul. That triumphant gathering of 10,000 libertarians in August 2012 was alive with a sense that their oft-dismissed ideas were finally hitting it big.

After all, Paul had enjoyed an impressive second-place finish in the GOP delegate hunt. The Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, had already announced his running mate as Representative Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, an Ayn Rand devotee whose selection libertarians felt was a nod their way. More promising, Ron Paul’s son Rand was a freshman U.S. senator with overwhelming buzz as potential presidential timber

## A SURPRISING LOOK AT A DYING PRACTICE

### DEATH ROW IS SHRINKING

About 600 fewer prisoners sit on death row than during a 2000 peak.



### MORAL DISSOCIATION

Advocates support the penalty knowing it will be misapplied.

|                       | Aware of risk of killing the innocent | Aware penalty doesn't deter crime |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Support death penalty | 63%                                   | 49%                               |
| Oppose death penalty  | 84%                                   | 78%                               |

### DEATH IN DISPROPORTION

**29:** Number of U.S. counties that have delivered **44%** of all death sentences since 1976  
**59:** Number of counties that delivered every U.S. death sentence in 2012.



if Romney lost to Barack Obama, as was likely. There was cause for optimism in libertarian quarters that the body politic was, for the first time in decades, “getting it.”

However, also on display that afternoon was the fundamental math problem that has forever kept libertarians on the fringe of elected politics: The vast majority of attendees were male. Most of the speakers to grace the stage were male. The honky-tonk music that blared forth was of a masculine, steel-stringed variety.

No political movement in modern America can succeed on testosterone alone, and what appeared to be a coming-out party at the Sun Dome, with banners and speeches proclaiming libertarianism “here to stay” and “taking root,” is likely to remain the movement’s high-water mark unless it can find a way to appeal to the other half of the American electorate.

Consider the fate of the Rand Paul presidential campaign: Paul was actually in good shape before Donald

Trump hijacked the 2016 nomination. Both *Politico* and *Time* magazine had declared Paul the “most interesting man in politics” precisely because some of his libertarian ideas—less foreign military engagement, greater personal privacy protection from government snooping, concern about the over-incarceration of Americans—could nudge the GOP toward new, less predictable stances. As late as last June, polls had Paul netting about seven percent of likely Republican voters. In the already crowded field, that figure was substantial.

Yet lurking inside that good news was something very bad: Paul drew about 13 percent of male Republicans—more than Jeb Bush or Marco Rubio—but a mere two percent of women, according to CNN. It was the most extreme gender gap in the bunch.

It would be easy to claim this as a Paul-specific problem, given that his campaign

rollout included gaffes such as the candidate mansplaining to female anchors how they should do their jobs and what questions they should ask him. But writ large, libertarianism is a widespread and troublesome turn-off to women. Data has piled up for years about the problem: Both a 2013 Public Religion Research Institute study and a 2014 Pew survey, for instance, found men outnumbering women two to one among self-identified libertarians.

This is partly due to branding. There are libertarians, who espouse a general antigovernment line, and there are Libertarians, members of the Libertarian Party. Some people are both, but the most prominent are the Pauls—Rand, Ron and Ryan—who all work their magic from within the Republican Party. The price of credibility with GOP vot-

ers, though, is making peace with the idea that our government will interfere with abortions and gay marriage, which taints the libertarian brand.

Meanwhile, the Libertarian Party may actually be more appealing to women—its 2012 platform called for government to stay out of abortion and gay marriage—but presidential nominee Gary Johnson didn’t make much effort to tell that to female voters for fear of alienating men. In any event, the party is a widespread flop, holding not a single seat in any state legislature, statewide office or Congress.

To some, what’s most surprising about this conundrum

► The Paul family’s male fan base may be their worst enemy



## ***The Libertarian Party is a widespread flop, holding not a single seat in any state legislature, statewide office or Congress.***

is that libertarianism’s patron saints, the authors Ayn Rand, Isabel Paterson and Rose Wilder Lane, are all women. Perhaps their message resounded precisely because it was what guys—especially the hairy-chested, Ron Swanson sort attracted to libertarianism’s self-reliance-at-all-costs ideal—wanted to hear from the opposite sex. Male libertarians weren’t resentful just of big government. They were resentful of anyone who told them what to say, think or do. In real life, the women they knew hassled them to be compassionate, generous, thoughtful, loyal. Rand, Paterson and Lane instead told them that selfishness was a virtue.

Indeed, in pondering what women dislike about libertarianism, it may help to consider why some men like it. The philosophy posits that any deviation from true self-reliance is not just a sign of weakness but a character flaw. Conveniently, though, men do not get pregnant, give birth or usually serve as the primary caregiver to offspring. On a practical level, these aspects of the female experience place women at physical risk, forcing them to rearrange their lives in dramatic ways and, very often, lead them to depend on the support of others.

Political and social scientists have long held that this dependence often makes women more sympathetic to others who seek and accept help, even if they recoil at doing so themselves. To this end, women who might otherwise be libertarians become Republicans, because

their party proposes a government that helps people less but at least a little.

Women are such a rarity in this movement that they take online handles that emphasize their gender. There’s Julie Borowski, who calls herself “Token Libertarian Girl” on her YouTube channel. There’s also Libertarian Ann, whose web shows have variously been known as “Ron Paul Girl Radio” and “1 Woman Vs. the Man.” And there’s Rachel Bolch-Thach, who rose to prominence specifically for being an attractive young delegate for Ron Paul at the 2012 convention and has run with that notoriety ever since as LibertyGirlTX on Facebook.

At least libertarian women seem concerned about the problem. Almost without exception, the only libertarians sounding an alarm about the male dominance of the cause are female. “No movement can survive without half the population—and especially not the half that still spends the most time influencing the next generation,” writes Bonnie Kristian on Rare.us, a libertarian web journal.

The guys aren’t having it, though. “Libertarianism does not address race, gender, religion, sexuality or any other class the left would like to see protected from offense. Nor should it,” libertarian firebrand Christopher Cantwell writes. “Libertarianism makes the radical assertion that these subjects are irrelevant outside of our own personal preferences, and that our own personal preferences are not how the whole of human society should be organized. So the short answer to libertarian diversity is, I don’t care, and neither should you.”

Straight white men who find efforts to appeal to people different from themselves unbecoming may congratulate one another for standing on principle. Perhaps as their numbers dwindle and their influence wanes, they can sit together in their sad little internet chat rooms and whisper, “We’ll always have Tampa.” ■ 147





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# Miracle Roses

*A dozen perfect red roses.  
Real flowers – that will last for years!*



Shown smaller than actual height of 8'.

Few things in life are more beautiful or romantic than a dozen red roses. But what a disappointment when they fade within days! Now, thanks to the ingenious sealed elliptical glass vase, these dozen red roses will not fade. Give your special someone the ultimate bouquet of real roses that have been preserved to last and last – an amazing gift for her enjoyment now, and in years to come.

*(continued on back)*

## ORDER FORM

The Danbury Mint  
47 Richards Avenue  
Norwalk, CT 06857

Order promptly  
for Valentine's Day  
delivery.

**Yes!** Send me *Miracle Roses* as described in this announcement.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Please print clearly.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Orders subject to acceptance.

For guaranteed Valentine's Day delivery:  
1-800-726-1184 • [www.danburymint.com](http://www.danburymint.com)



FOR GUARANTEED VALENTINE'S DAY DELIVERY:  
1-800-726-1184 • [www.danburymint.com](http://www.danburymint.com)



(continued from other side)

### *Stunningly presented!*

What a difference this long-lasting bouquet will make to any room! Just imagine the look on her face when she sees it, and the years of enjoyment she will get from this bouquet every time she looks at it. No matter where she displays it, she's bound to receive compliments.

The dozen red roses have been carefully arranged within the glass vase and sealed with a permanent air-tight lid. The classic elliptical shape of the vase showcases the bouquet perfectly. What's more, see how the bouquet has been tied at the base with fine white netting and ribbon.

### *Remarkable price.*

You can acquire *Miracle Roses* for just \$99 plus \$7<sup>50</sup> shipping and service, payable in three monthly installments of \$35<sup>50</sup>. That's a great value for a bouquet of real roses that will last for years!

### *Satisfaction guaranteed.*

You can order with confidence because your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you or your loved one are not completely delighted with your *Miracle Roses*, simply return them within 45 days for a FULL refund. A remarkable gift for your loved one, *Miracle Roses* are bound to be cherished and treasured for years to come.

Demand is expected to be high for this exclusive bouquet. So don't delay. Order today!

*the Danbury Mint*

Supplement to Playboy Magazine

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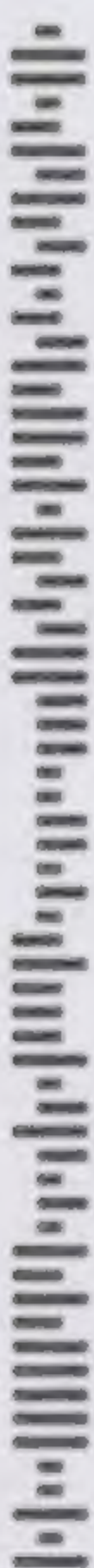
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NORWALK CT 06860-0100



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NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES







John Walker & Sons

BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY

# JOY WILL TAKE YOU FURTHER™

KEEP WALKING.



OK GO, SOUND EXPLORERS  
AND MUSIC VIDEO PIONEERS.

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.  
JOHNNIE WALKER BLACK LABEL Blended Scotch Whisky.  
40% Alc/Vol. ©2015 Imported by Diageo, Norwalk, CT.

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